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Stanley W. Galli

SOLVING VISUAL PROBLEMS--AN ARTIST'S LIFE

Interviews Conducted by  
Suzanne B. Riess  
in 2002

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral history is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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Stanley W. Galli, "Solving Visual Problems--An Artist's Life," an oral history conducted in 2002, by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2003.

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Stanley Galli, photograph by Suzanne Riess





## Cataloging Information

GALLI, Stanley W. (b. 1912)

*Solving Visual Problems—An Artist's Life*. 2003, v, 137 pp.

Galli family background, San Francisco; artistic beginnings, schools; world of advertising and commercial illustration; marriage to Frances Salvato, war years; magazine clients *True*, *Saturday Evening Post*, others; Famous Artists School, comments on some famous artists, friends; thoughts on artistic influences, color vs. black and white, challenge of change, galleries, a studio at home, galleries; working in Italy, discovering Early California as a subject; the Ghost Figure Paintings. Appended autobiographical narratives of aspects of Galli's life story, travels, friends; transcript of a 2002 luncheon conversation; partial transcript of a 1988 conversation at Park City, Utah.

Interviewed 2002 by Suzanne B. Riess



DONORS TO  
THE STANLEY W. GALLI ORAL HISTORY

The Regional Oral History Office, on behalf of future researchers, would like to express its thanks to the following individuals and organizations whose encouragement and support have made possible this oral history of Stanley W. Galli.

James and Susan Acquistapace  
The John Bates Foundation  
Ernest and Nancy Burroughs  
Eugene B. Ceccotti  
Lee and Eva Ceccotti  
John Dondero  
Timothy and Barbara Galli  
Amado Gonzalez  
Henry B. Grandin, Jr.  
Ivan and Phyllis Green  
Ruth and Alfred Heller  
Elinor G. Lea  
Allan Littman  
David Manship  
Dianne and Doug Manship, Jr.  
Gianluca Rattazzi  
Edward C. Scheller  
Jane Spiller  
Steven T. Spiller  
Alfred Wilsey, Jr.



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY--Stanley W. Galli

In 1997 Charles Faulhaber, the director of the Bancroft Library, received a letter from Allan Littman to introduce the painter Stanley Galli. In that letter Mr. Littman proposed that the Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office undertake an oral history with Stanley Galli that would include illustrations of his work in all its variety, and that would shed light on a little documented aspect of California art history, commercial illustration. That good idea was stalled while Mr. Galli recovered from a stroke, but in spring of 2002 the project was made possible through Mr. Littman and a group of donors who were collectors and friends.

I went to meet Stan Galli and his wife Fran at their house in Kentfield, California. We sat together at the sunny end of their living room and I answered their questions about how oral histories are conducted, and I learned a bit about the dimensions of the Galli story. But mostly I indulged my own questions about a roomful, a houseful, of wonderful colorful paintings and furniture and crafts. The house--I later learned it was an early example of the work of William Wilson Wurster--was a generous sprawl of space, and the "exhibition policy" of the Gallis was all about abundance. It was a lovely stimulating place. Fran Galli's paintings were an unfailingly bright note.

The taped interviews began the next week, and the text of the finished oral history is mostly chronological, and subject-matter organized. We met in the studio, a woodsy-looking building set a ways apart from the house. Stan would always arrive before I did, and generally he was at work at the drawing board. At the time of the first couple of interviews, he and Fran were tending to the myriad details preparatory to a joint exhibition of their paintings in Vacaville, California. But on the third visit, to my great surprise I realized that Stan was creating a written life story for me, or rather, for history. Inspired by our conversations, recalling in tranquility a few more details, and perhaps interested in escaping the inquiry mode, he wrote and dictated additional material. That material is found in the Appendices, and it particularly enriches the account of farmhouse and friends in Tuscany. At several points in the text Stan's narrative is woven into the oral history, creating a new genre to accommodate the fact that the oral history interview process often creates new streams of memories after the interviews are over.

Subsequent to the first two tape-recorded interviews I decided to use in a supplementary way a digital video camera, and a still camera, to capture illustrations of some of the work that we were talking about to incorporate in the oral history. And a few months after the interviews were completed an opportunity came up to film a summer luncheon with Stan and Fran and collectors and friends at Allan Littman's house. The transcribed luncheon conversation is appended, and a copy of the video is deposited in the Bancroft Library. Then just as the oral history was in the final processing, a friend of Stan's sent him a tape from a 1988 conference in Park City, Utah, and sections of the transcript of that are also included. Thus a multi-layered oral history read lies ahead for the reader.

The Italian part of the Galli story draws one in—two artists in a 16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse in Tuscany's Pieve a Presciano. The Gallis by all accounts were wonderful and generous hosts in their tenure in Italy and I can testify to that from my Kentfield experience. A charming finale to the oral history interviews was our very Italian luncheon of pasta and wine in the shade of the garden—the pasta drew on Fran's imposingly productive garden. Indeed Fran was the attentive angel to this oral history undertaking, while also attending to her studio and her own work.

Thanks to the Gallis, to Allan Littman, to all the generous donors, for this opportunity to explore ideas with an artist.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954 to augment through tape-recorded memoirs the Library's materials on the history of California and the West. Copies of all interviews are available for research use in The Bancroft Library and in the UCLA Department of Special Collections. The office is under the direction of Richard Cándida Smith, Director, and the administrative direction of Charles B. Faulhaber, James D. Hart Director of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Suzanne B. Riess, Senior Editor  
Regional Oral History Office

Berkeley, California  
January 2003

Regional Oral History Office  
Room 486 The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Stanley Walter Galli

Date of birth January 18 1912 Birthplace San Francisco, CA

Father's full name Ismerel Galli

Occupation Green-Grocer-proprietor Birthplace Torino, Lucca, Italy

Mother's full name Laura Frediani Galli

Occupation housewife Birthplace Parezzana, Lucca, Italy

Your spouse/partner Frances Margaret Salvato Galli

Occupation painter, housewife Birthplace San Francisco

Your children Timothy A Galli - Thomas R Galli - Licensed Landscape Architect - Timothy A Galli, Senior VP Eastman Kodak Savings & Loan

Where did you grow up? San Francisco (mainly) Reno, Nevada 3 1/2 years

Present community Kentfield CA

Education Grammar School, High School, Calif. School of Fine Arts, S.F. Art Institute, Art Center School LA

Occupation(s) Illustrator, 1938-1968 - Fine Arts 1968 to present  
was given a advanced  
Credential to teach students communication skills - S.F. City College - 6 1/2 years

Areas of expertise in

Other interests or activities Avid interest in views of others about aesthetics and lots of reading about artists and their views - maintaining contact with friends around the world

Organizations in which you are active N.Y. Society of Illustrators  
S.F. Society of Illustrators

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: May 20 2002



# STANLEY GALLI

- BORN:** San Francisco, 1912.
- RESIDES:** Kentfield, California.
- EDUCATION:** Scholarship at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) children's Class, Alice B. Chittendan, Instructor, 1926-1927; California School of Fine Arts, 1936-1938; Art Center School, Los Angeles, 1939.
- 1938-1941:** Begins to work as an illustrator soon becoming a partner in Patterson & Hall.
- 1941-1945:** Called by the Navy Department to make naval training manuals.
- 1945-1949:** Becomes a freelance illustrator and commercial artist.
- 1951-1968:** Illustrates fiction for the *Saturday Evening Post*, *McCall's*, *Today's Woman*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Reader's Digest*.
- 1952-1971:** Creates commercial illustrations for Weyerhaeuser Co. Designs twenty-three U.S. postage stamps.
- 1969-1971:** With his wife, spends two years in Rome and begins his life as a fine artist. They purchase a farmhouse in Tuscany where both of them paint for several months each summer until 1996.
- 1981:** Inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Museum of American Illustration, New York.
- 1995:** Has an exhibition of illustrations and fine art at the Museo ItaloAmericano.

Stanley Galli's career as an illustrator and advertising artist honed his skills so that he could convincingly render most any subject. When he turned his attention to fine art painting, his rendering abilities led him toward figuration unlike other artists who rejected Modernisms' penchant for abstraction. It did not take long for Galli to reach his stride and find his own artistic voice. His painting, *Santa Maria Maggiore*, Rome (1997), is one of the latest statements of his *Pavimento* series that had its beginnings in the early eighties. Beginning in 1971, the artist and his painter wife spent several months each year in their sixteenth-century Tuscan farmhouse. In Italy, they came into intimate contact with their Italian roots. Travelling throughout Italy, Galli became fascinated by the complex, geometric patterns of marble inlay and mosaics seen in the floors of historic Italian churches. Not only was he fascinated by the abstract intricacies of these floors, his imagination was aroused by the idea of depicting the parade of courtiers and nobility who had at one time walked there. These paintings serve the artist as a rite-of-passage back into time.

R. W.

"I love to draw. As an illustrator from the West Coast, I had to work at a broad range of subject matters. It made me learn to draw without models. As a consequence, when I stopped illustrating and started a career as a painter, I found that I could fashion visual statements that were reasonably convincing. After two years living and working in Rome, I bought an ancient farmhouse in Tuscany. We spent all of our summers there from 1970 until 1996, painting and studying. There, I focused on my awakened interest in the Early Spanish Colonial Period of California and lately in the Italian scene and its rich cultural past. So, on I go, trying to make an adventure out of aesthetic explorations."

Stanley Galli





## I GETTING STARTED: ART SCHOOL, ADVERTISING WORK, MARRIAGE

[Interview 1: March 28, 2002]

### Family Background, San Francisco Neighborhood

Galli: We just don't seem to know much about the family.

Riess: But you know that they were from Lucca?

Galli: Oh yes, oh sure. I visited there and I visited my father's hometown [Toringo] and my mother's hometown [Parezzana], and they're just outside of Lucca.<sup>1</sup>

Riess: Were they from farming families in Lucca?

Galli: No, they weren't. Well, gosh, I can't even answer that, but the village that my mother came from was a courtyard and the whole family lived in that courtyard. What they did I don't know because we only visited them once. I brought my children there and it was just a quick visit. They were very nice. I didn't visit my father's village at all, but I did stop and go to it. But it's a very sad thing that we don't know anything about our families.

Riess: You were born in this country?

Galli: Yes, I was born here, in San Francisco as a matter of fact.

Riess: And your parents were married here?

Galli: They were married here, yes.

Riess: Were you swept into the Italian-American community here?

Galli: No, we weren't, really. We lived out in the Pacific Heights district, which was really an Anglo-Saxon affair, you know.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D.

Riess: Well, tell me about that. Were you conscious that you were in an Anglo-Saxon world?

Galli: Not a bit. When you're children you take life as it comes. So I had no recollection of knowing the difference. It's just that there were French people there, there were three French laundries right in the neighborhood, and we got to know them. It was a mixture of people. My God, you're making me recollect things I've put aside for a long time.

Riess: I'm interested in the Italian background. I was reading about Italian immigrants in San Francisco and how they brought their old rivalries. The northern Italians were still picking on the southern Italians. They brought their old issues.

Galli: No, I didn't see any of that at all. We lived in an environment that was just kind of neutral. It was a very good neighborhood.

Riess: Describe the neighborhood to me.

Galli: I don't know if you know San Francisco that well but it was on the edge of--Laurel Hill Cemetery was on one side and the Presidio on the other side. There were about five blocks between them. It was that kind of neighborhood. There was a mixture of people. They rented a house, a flat, on Walnut Street and it was at the other extreme. It was right near the Laurel Hill Cemetery. It was about five blocks away from the Presidio, and I'd go to the Presidio to play. I'm just beginning to realize that Presidio is a Spanish word. I've been reading a lot of early California history, now that I've gotten interested. But it was a mixture of people. One neighbor was named Clark and the other was Lorenzini, an Italian.

Riess: Did your parents speak Italian at home?

Galli: No. They would argue in Italian. They would argue a lot. No, they wanted to be American citizens right away. That's the difference between today and then. My father spoke excellent English and my mother did too. I didn't know the difference. I didn't speak any Italian at home. My mother would say something to me once in a while, to get after me, you know, in Italian. But that's all I knew. So I had to learn it when I went to Italy.

Riess: What do you remember about how your parents socialized?

Galli: I have to think a little bit. Well, we had cousins and they would come over and they'd have dinners. But they're a mixture of people, mostly Italian.

Riess: Was your mother a good cook?

Galli: Fair. She didn't like to cook but she did very well.

Riess: But it was Italian?

Galli: Oh yes, absolutely, yes.

Riess: What would you do on the weekends? Did you have a car?



Galli: My father bought a car, later on. My mother and father didn't get along so they got divorced. But, you know, it was later on in my life. As far as I can recollect, the divorce happened in 1925.

Riess: How old were you?

Galli: I was about twelve or fourteen when they divorced. It was traumatic. But I used to see my father all the time. He'd come by with his new car that he bought and he'd take me out. We'd go down to the market and he'd go pay his bills. He had a lot of bills to pay because he was in the produce business. He had a market and it was a wonderful market, good God, it was in a wealthy neighborhood so they had a big clientele. Sacramento and Presidio Avenue, right next to the Vogue Theater.

Riess: Were you an only child?

Galli: No, I had two sisters. One was older and she died about three or four years ago, and my younger sister is still alive.

Riess: And your father's business, do you know whether anybody backed him or helped him get started in that?

Galli: No I don't. He had a partner named Molinari. But that's all vague in my mind. I just don't know how he got started. None of us ever talked about things like that. You know how that is.

Riess: Would you be able to draw that grocery store now?

Galli: Well, yes, I could. I could draw a plan of it because my father had the produce and he had a fish market. And then Pometta had a creamery in the back end of the store and then across the aisle was a very fancy butcher. He had about three or four butchers working for him.

Riess: They were sort of subletting this from your father?

Galli: No, no. I think they paid rent. I don't even know who owned the store. I thought my father and all the others owned it but I never, never figured that out. You're asking questions that I've never thought about.

Riess: When we first met you said you could draw anything, and so I wondered if you put your hand to it whether you could re-create the shelves of your father's store?

Galli: Yes, I could. Maybe I ought to draw it for you.

Riess: That would be wonderful. Just a simple sense of what it was. [See illustrations]

Do you think your father loved his work?

Galli: Oh yes, but he loved to gamble too, and that was the cause for divorce. My mother wanted to buy property and he didn't want to buy property, he wanted to gamble, and he would lose a lot of money.

Riess: He bet on the horses?

Galli: No, no, he gambled, he played cards. He played briscola.

Riess: How do you spell it?

Galli: I have to think about it--b-r-i-s-c-o-l-a, I guess. It's a common game over there [Italy]. In our little town over there they play that too.

Riess: There was a lot of money riding on it.

Galli: Oh, all the time, yes, oh sure. And he earned well, my God. And that was the crux of the divorce, really. He didn't want to spend any money on property, he just liked to gamble. He liked the social part of it, I guess. I never figured out why he liked to gamble because I don't gamble at all, and I lived in Reno for a while. [laughs]

Riess: Did he have to go to work six days a week in that business?

Galli: Yes, six days a week. He'd get up very early in the morning to go to the produce market down on the waterfront. We'd go down and he'd buy me candy and stuff like that, and we'd have a lovely time.

I, Stanley W. Galli, was one of three children born to Laura Frediani Galli and Ismene Galli. The two others were sisters Irene and Lorraine A. Irene was born March 25, 1904, and died December 22, 1991, age 87. Lorraine A. was born October 3, 1916 and she is still alive. Stanley W., born January 18, 1912 and still here.<sup>2</sup>

My father was an easygoing man and I liked him a lot. He was an inveterate gambler at cards and would lose a lot of money at this. The game was an Italian one called Briscola. I don't know much about the game but while living in Italy I had a friend there who was an expert at it, but I had no interest in gambling at all, so I never asked about it. Anyway, the gambling was the only discord in the household that I could detect and it ended up finally in divorce. My mother wanted to buy property but he gambled all his money away. His market was doing well and he could have easily put aside money for property, according to my mother. If he had bought some property there might not have been a divorce.

My father was an amiable man and everyone seemed to like him. I certainly liked him. The date of the divorce eludes me but it was around 1925. I would continue to see him. He had visiting privileges and so we three saw him fairly frequently. At that time he purchased a new

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<sup>2</sup> After the first interview with Mr. Galli by the interviewer, Suzanne Riess, Mr. Galli was inspired to begin a series of hand-written accounts of the narrative as well as of various events in his life that were particularly meaningful to him in recollection. They are inserted throughout the oral history text, or else in the Appendices, as indicated.

automobile, an Essex touring car with a patented California Top. It had sliding windows and was quite sporty. I, especially, went to a lot of places with him. Shortly after the divorce we moved from 438 Walnut St. to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue between Clement and California streets, still very close to Madison Grammar School.

My father co-owned a produce and fish, poultry section in the Gilt Edge Market at Sacramento and Presidio avenues right next to the then Rex Theatre, later the Vogue Theatre. The other sections of the market were a butcher shop owned by a Mr. Armitage, and a Butter and Dairy products section owned by a Mr. Pometta, an Italian-Swiss man. He produced butter and some cheeses. My father ran the poultry and fish counter. He spent some of his time killing chickens and preparing them for sale. He took care of fish sales and the buying of those items, as well as going to the produce market in the produce district which was down close to the waterfront. This was in the early hours of the morning.

To go to the produce market I remember that my father had to be out of the house by 4:30 a.m. He would work all day and come home after closing the market about 6:30 p.m. A long day. He would invariably fall asleep in the kitchen after supper. Joe Molinari was his partner. He was a lot younger man and went off to World War I and was gassed and missing for a long while. The time that sticks in my mind is one year and a half. He finally turned up and resumed the partnership.

An amusing incident comes to mind at this point. My father kept his live poultry in a room up in the back of the market. They were in pens with doors so that you could reach in and grab a chicken. Somehow one of the doors got left open and the chickens got out. There was a door that opened on a broad alley that served as an emergency exit for the theater next door. There were two doors that were always opened when the janitor cleaned the theater. The chickens wandered into the theater apparently unbeknownst to the janitor, and when he finished he closed the doors. This was on a Saturday, and I and some of my friends went to the matinees they had on Saturdays--10 cents apiece, how about that! The owner ran the projection up in the back of the theater and couldn't do anything about what followed.

Evidently a couple of the chickens wandered up onto the stage not noticed by anyone in the dim light of the moment before the picture started. The moment the picture flashed on the screen the chickens got frightened and started trying to fly off the stage. The combination of picture flashing and the sounds of the organ playing was enough to make the hilarious scene that followed. It didn't last long, however, but we all had a great laugh. The chickens quieted down and wandered around among the sparse attendance at the front of the theater. I guess that the owner, when he finished, came down and let the chickens out. He and my father had a talk about the problem and it never occurred again.

I remember another incident. I used to go down to the market a lot because we lived only a block and half away on Walnut Street between Sacramento and California streets. One day I was at the market when we all heard shouts from down the street—"runaway horse." Sure enough, a horse pulling a wagon came tearing up Sacramento Street. When he got to the corner of Presidio he decided to turn and make his way to California Street. The momentum made the wagon overturn, knocking the horse down and injuring him. A policeman arrived on the scene and, I guess, determined that the horse was badly injured and shot him through the head. It was dramatic for me as a kid.

The Gilt Edge Market had a horse and wagon for deliveries. The horse was a very smart gray mare named Flora. Flora was kept in a barn down on California and Divisadero Streets. The driver would pick her up in the morning and drive her up to the market. I used to go on deliveries once in a while. It was a hilly section of San Francisco. One street in particular stays in my mind. It was Pacific Avenue, a steep cobblestone street, a block long, off Presidio Avenue. Flora learned to manage that street with a maneuver that cocked the wagon at an angle that allowed the steel rimmed wheels to slide over the cobblestones, modifying the forward weight on her. We merrily made our way to the next customer. That impressed me. Those wagon days didn't last long, however. It must have been around 1924 when my father and his partner bought a "White" delivery vehicle. That ended Flora's days at the market and the end of an era.

Riess: How did your mother occupy herself?

Galli: Well, she took care of the family and she did cooking and housecleaning and all the mother stuff, just as my wife does.

Riess: Did your mother have any inclinations to any career, do you think?

Galli: Not a bit, no, I don't think so. She had a grocery store and she worked at that.

Riess: You mean a separate grocery store?

Galli: Yes, well, in Reno. After the divorce, we went to Reno. [Appendix A]

Riess: Oh, so that's how you get to Reno.

Was your family Catholic?

Galli: Yes, they were.

Riess: Very observant?

Galli: Not at all. I don't know what happened, but my mother never sent me to church. I remember a priest came to the door and she slammed the door in his face. I don't know what he said to her. I guess because of the divorce, you know.



## The Artist's Watercolors, and First Lessons

Riess: What school did you go to?

Galli: I went to a very lovely school, Madison Grammar School. It was in the neighborhood and it was just filled with lovely people. It had wonderful teachers. They let me draw--otherwise I'd get into fights.

Riess: Really? How would you explain that now?

Galli: Well, I don't know, I make it sound very dramatic. I never got into any fights at all, really.

Riess: Did you start out drawing at home?

Galli: Absolutely, yes, yes I sure did, my God, I was drawing all the time.

When I was five, my mother gave me a watercolor set, a little dinky one. And I would be down at my father's store all the time--it was just only a block away. There was a stationery store across the street, so I dashed over there because I wanted to see if they had a watercolor set, and my God, they had one in the window that was five times longer than the one my mother gave me. I was standing there, transfixed I guess, because a man came up the street and he had a cane because I heard it clicking.

He stopped behind me and I guess I was looking so intently at this watercolor set that--I can't remember anything he said, but he took me by the hand, inside the store. He had the lady take it out of the window, put it on the counter, and he bought it for me! I can't even remember whether I thanked him. I know I rushed home and my mother thought, "Gee whiz, you didn't steal it, did you?" I don't know why she said that because it was all wrapped up, you know. Anyway, that's not the end of the story.

Riess: And what was his name?

Galli: Abraham Rosenberg. I found that out later. I didn't know who he was at the time.

So I went on to grammar school. In the fifth grade we had a young Chinese boy come into the class, couldn't speak a word of English, but within a month he was communicating. I liked him because he liked to draw and he was athletic, and so was I. His father was a cook in a house on Jackson Street, a block away from the Presidio. On Saturdays I'd go down and get him and we'd go into the Presidio and play.

Well, one day I went down there, and he had to go the bathroom, so I was waiting out in the hall downstairs and a man came down the stairs, and he was the guy who bought me the watercolor set! The same man! I can't remember what we talked about but he ended up saying, "You know, Lee likes to draw, and an artist has to experience many things." So he would program things for us to see, you know, all kinds of things, like Illinois Pacific Glass Company where they made bottles and all kinds of things, and the RCA Sending Station, the Southern Pacific shops where they put locomotives together, you know. His chauffeur

would drive us there. He had a big Pierce Arrow, and his chauffeur would drop us off there and pick us up, wait for us, and take us home. So, you know, that was the way.

Riess: Did your parents wonder what this was all about?

Galli: I guess she did. I never asked my mother. She knew it was okay. A chauffeur picking us up, it meant that they were pretty substantial people. You're asking me things that I never thought of asking. I never asked my mother what she thought, she just let me go.

Riess: How did Mr. Rosenberg make his money?

Galli: He was in the dried fruit business. He made pots of money during World War I. He had a big house and he had two Pierce Arrows, not one, two--one that would take him to work and then a roadster.

Then when I got into the seventh grade the teacher announced to me that I was going to go to art school, the Saturday classes, children's classes. He got me a scholarship, Abraham Rosenberg!

Riess: And these were where?

Galli: The San Francisco Art Institute. At that time it was called California School of Fine Arts. It was brand new. I had a wonderful Welsh teacher named Alice B. Chittendon and we got along famously.

Another incident of note happened to me about that time. It was just before I started Madison Grammar School. Since I was drawing all the time, my mother bought me a minuscule watercolor set that I must have asked for. I can't remember that but I do remember that she kept saying to me, "You are going to be a doctor or a lawyer, aren't you, Stanley?" I would say, "Yes, Ma." She was from Parezanna, a small town just outside the walls of Lucca. The Frediani clan all lived around a courtyard known as Corte Frediani and certainly was not affluent. We visited there in 1952.

Anyway, I was down at the market when I first got the watercolors. Directly across the street was a stationary store with a large display window. I went over to see what they had in the window. Wow! There in front of my eyes was a watercolor set that was three or four times larger than mine and filled with gorgeous color. A man came up behind me and, I guess, asked me what I was looking at so intently. The upshot of all this is that he took me by the hand into the store and had the lady take the box out of the window and he bought it for me. I still don't know whether I thanked him. I just don't recall any conversation. I just dashed home with this lovely gift. My mother was surprised and wondered about it. I was so happy that I couldn't judge any reaction.

A few years passed and were filled with a lot of watercolor drawings and visits to the De Young Museum and later the new Palace of the Legion of Honor. I'd be at the library all the time looking for books about artists. I

recall one book that fascinated me, William Hunt's *Talks on Art*. I think that was the title. It was an unusual book--I recall you opened it and read sideways. The whole book was notes of his comments while teaching class. It was most fascinating to me. My reading ranged all over the place. I read Samuel Pepys *Diaries* when I was in the seventh grade. Real life fascinated me.

When I was in the fifth grade at Madison, a young Chinese boy entered class. He couldn't speak a word of English at the outset but within a month he was able to make himself understood. I liked him. He liked to draw and was athletic and so was I. We had a lot in common. His father was the cook in a house on Jackson Street near Maple Street, a block from the Presidio which, at that time, was a wonderland for kids like us. On Saturdays I would walk the short distance from my house to his and we would go over the wall into the Presidio.

One Saturday I went to get him. He had to go to the bathroom, and while I was waiting outside his downstairs room a man came down the stairs. It was the man who had bought me the watercolor set some years back. I can't remember any of the conversation but I do remember what he said about art and artists. He said, "Artists should experience many things." He was Abraham Rosenberg, owner of Rosenberg Dried Fruit Company. He had made pots of money during World War I and was still going strong.

He would go to work in a chauffeur-driven Pierce Arrow and while at work would make arrangements for Lee Ting and me to have guided tours of businesses, like the Illinois Pacific Glass Co., Southern Pacific Railroad shops where we saw locomotives being repaired and rolling stock looked after; RCA Sending Station and many others that gave us a picture of the work world we lived in. When the places he made appointments for could be reached by trolley, we did that. Other more remote places he would send us off in his Pierce Arrow with the chauffeur. It was quite something. He would sometimes accompany us, like for the RCA Sending Station located in a remote section of the Presidio. We had to walk there through some woods off First Avenue. Anyway, it was all great.

When we got to the seventh grade, my teacher, Miss Bartlett, announced to me that I had a scholarship at the new art school building in San Francisco at Chestnut and Jones Streets with temporary quarters on lower California Street near Market Street. The temporary quarters had been in use for some time after the earthquake of 1906 had demolished the Mark Hopkins Institute, which was the art school of the times. I think I only spent a month and a half at that temporary school before the new art school was finished. I was enrolled in a children's class under Alice B. Chittendon, a lovely elderly Scotch woman that I became very friendly with. We had clothed models and I learned to draw the clothed human figure.

I spent two years there and it was a wonderful gift from Abraham Rosenberg. I would see him during that period. Also his daughter Louise, who went to Vassar, I helped her once with an art assignment she had for an art class she was in. Now that I think about all this, it strikes me as curious that I can't remember any reaction to all of this at home. My mother seemed to accept it as one of those things that happen.

Anyway, I started high school shortly. Graduates of Madison School were designated to go to Lowell High which was in our area. Galileo High School was newly built and the newspapers were full of publicity about the new school. They touted a telescope observatory on the top of the school. All the males of my class, including Lee Ting, decided to go to Galileo. I was the only one that stayed with my assigned school, which was Lowell. And there were three girls from my class there. Anyway, that turned out to be a good choice. I immediately was tapped for work on the school paper and to work on the school annuals. I did some visual reporting when Charles and Kathleen Norris, two prominent writers and Lowell alumnae, were asked to lecture at the school. I did portraits of the two as they spoke and they were reproduced in the school paper.

The art teachers at Lowell were lovely to me. Mrs. O'Malley and Mr. Sewell were my life drawing teachers. Miss Herman was a design teacher and the most helpful of the three. She was much interested in my abilities. She got me an appointment with Ralph Stackpole who had just returned from Mexico with Diego Rivera. He had a studio at the back of a place on Montgomery Street. He was extremely cordial. I showed him some drawings that I did. He told me I should draw, draw, draw. He gave me a pen made of bamboo that had a glass pen point--it was a fountain pen from Japan. The other person that Miss Herman got me an appointment with was the famous puppeteer, Blanding Sloan. He was wonderful and showed me his puppets and how they worked.

When I wasn't in school, I did a number of watercolor paintings around the San Francisco waterfront, Telegraph Hill, Bayshore around Hunter's Point, and various other locations. I kept them, but can't now find them.

### **Home Life, Interests**

Riess: Okay, now I'm going to return to the past a little bit longer. I wondered what was on the walls of your house at home? In other words, what kind of exposure did you have to art?

Galli: Well, I would go to the museums, the Legion of Honor and the de Young Museum. The San Francisco Museum of Contemporary [Modern] Art was not built then. It was built in about 1929, I guess. I would go down there too, but it was a long way off. I'd have to take a streetcar to get down there.



Riess: When you were a little kid with your watercolors--did you also have crayons or was it always watercolors?

Galli: Oh, I had crayons, God I had everything. At school they let me draw! I'd draw on the blackboard to amuse everybody. The teacher would say, "Stanley, get up and draw."

Riess: And were you pretty good?

Galli: Well, I guess. I don't think I'm very good at all, even now. But I just can't remember what the heck I drew. I drew trains and things like that. I liked the vehicles.

Riess: Boy stuff.

Galli: Yes, boy stuff, sure. But thinking back, I read a lot too. I read *Robin Hood*. That fascinated me. And I read Samuel Pepys *Diary* at that time.

Riess: Did you? Why do you think you read that?

Galli: Well, I don't know, I was in the library all the time and I just liked fact. It interested me, you know, what real people did. That fascinated me. I read Pepys *Diary* when I was in grammar school.

I guess, in retrospect, it was interesting that I did that. I've always had that bent. But, now that I'm a lot older, I begin to realize how much I don't know. I listen to all these people on television. I listen to Charlie Rose interviewing people that are so smart, my God, they have more knowledge than I'll ever be able to accumulate. Like today they talked about Israel. Those people know so much about everything that's going on! I don't know a damn thing!

Riess: Did your father like to talk about books, or the news? Was he interested in politics?

Galli: Oh yes, he read a lot too. He had a lot of books around and he read stuff like I read. But he just loved to gamble. That was his downfall. And he had to get up so early and he would come home and after dinner he would fall asleep, so never much conversation. And he died of cancer because he would smoke cigars and then chew the ends of them. He died of liver cancer, at sixty-two.

Riess: That's sad. Were there books in the house, or did you mostly go to the library?

Galli: I would go to the library and bring them home. We just had a few books around that my father had accumulated, but there were not very many. But it interested me that he read what I liked to read. They were all pretty historical, you know, stuff like that. That interests me now. It didn't at the time, but I didn't pay much attention. Now that I think about it, it interests me.

Riess: How about newspapers? Did you have a daily newspaper that he brought home?

Galli: Oh yes. We used to get the newspaper but I didn't pay much attention to it.

Riess: How were papers illustrated then?

Galli: They were mostly illustrated by drawings, black and white, but then I guess photographs too. I can't remember. There was not much illustration in the newspapers. There were drawings for ads and they were black and white, of course, no color at all. At that time there was just no color at all, really.

Riess: Was that interesting to you, to look at those drawings in the newspaper, do you think?

Galli: I guess not really. No.

Riess: Do you remember looking at books illustrated by N.C. Wyeth? Like *Robinson Crusoe*, maybe?

Galli: Yes, and Wyeth was my favorite. I just loved those illustrations. They were very romantic.

Riess: That's a great ability, to bring something to life with a drawing.

Galli: Oh sure, I like that idea. That's the thing I've been, you know, involved with.

Riess: Did you have any exposure at all to the World's Fair, the Panama Pacific?

Galli: Yes, I did. I remember that fair so very well. I remember certain events there. For instance, the thing that sticks in my mind is that they had a little train thing, and I remember the Tower of Jewels.

Riess: How old would you have been?

Galli: I guess it was 1915. I was three years old. It is indelible in my mind, you know, the panorama. I remember seeing a lot of ships out in the bay and it was the navy, white ships, all battleships out there, my God. I remember that but not much else. I can't remember even that very well, but it had to be that way. It was pretty dramatic.

I was just reading about the fair. My next-door neighbor is a fair buff and he writes about world fairs. Alfred Heller.

Riess: Did you do any modeling or sculptural work?

Galli: Not really, that came later. I did a little sculpture work on commission, you know, medallions and things of that kind. I had to do everything.

Riess: Do you think it takes a different part of the brain? I mean, the three-dimensional is very, very different?

Galli: No, I don't think so at all. I could do three-dimensional stuff, you know, I've done it. But I just like to draw though, that's the thing. My interests are in that vein, really.

Riess: Tell me how it worked after they separated, after their divorce. You lived at home still?

Galli: Yes, we moved from where we were and my father would come to see us. We moved into the avenues, Third Avenue. It wasn't a very long distance away. It was close to school, close to grammar school, Third Avenue between Clement and California.<sup>3</sup>

Riess: Your father supported your mother?

Galli: I guess he did, yes, he must have.

Riess: She didn't go to work at that time?

Galli: No, no, she didn't go to work at all. No, she just stayed home and took care of us and paid the rent. You're asking things that I've just never thought about.

### **Talent, Teachers, Friends**

Riess: You said in one of your biographical pieces that, "School teachers and families of friends fostered my talent." I wondered what you meant by "families of friends"?

Galli: That was the Abenheims. I was very close to their son, Peter, and the family would take me down to Woodside and we painted their walls. We did some murals on their walls, down at their country place. He was the partner in a big mercantile laundry. And when I was up in Reno they knew that I wanted to come down to San Francisco, and when the NRA came in it created jobs. So they called me and I came down to San Francisco and started working for this laundry, the Galland Mercantile Laundry.

Riess: And just to be clear, you didn't have any art lessons until you took those Saturday classes? You were self-taught?

Galli: Yes, I was self-taught until I took those lessons, and I had two years of that, a scholarship for two years.

Riess: As a self-taught artist were you disciplined in what you were doing? Did you copy work?

Galli: No, no, I didn't copy anything, I just drew it out of my head.

Riess: Let's say you had some free time after school and you were maybe in fourth grade or something, what did you do with your watercolors?

Galli: Oh, I'd go out and paint landscapes. Good God, you know, I was out there all the time! I would go up to Telegraph Hill and paint those wonderful trees. It was just a bare thing up there. Just everywhere, I would go sketching.

Riess: More landscapes than people?

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for more on this period of Galli's life.

Galli: Yes, yes, I was into that, yes.

Riess: Do you remember being frustrated at being unable to get onto paper what you saw?

Galli: No, no, never had that kind of problem, really. But, you know, every time you make a drawing you want to make it better. It just doesn't come out the way you wanted it.

Riess: When you went to the museums were you looking, for instance, at the Impressionists for Impressionist technique?

Galli: No, I wasn't interested in any "isms" at all. I just liked to see what was there, and God, it impressed the heck out of me.

Riess: But it didn't change the direction of your work?

Galli: I don't think so, no, no.

Riess: It's almost as if you were without outside influence. You're saying that your art really comes from very much inside of you?

Galli: I think so, but there is a limit to that too, limit of intelligence. What you choose to do is a sign of the way you think.

Riess: Tell me what you remember of how those Saturday morning classes were run.

Galli: You'd come in and have a model, a clothed one of course. You'd just draw from the model, and the teacher would come around and correct it and tell you what was wrong with it. She would take the charcoal and show you what was wrong with it.

Riess: So the first class was charcoal drawing?

Galli: Mainly, yes. It was all charcoal drawing, on paper.

Riess: Have you had the experience of teaching?

Galli: Yes, I did. I taught a class over at City College for about five years, in commercial art, one day a week. The head of the department wanted me to teach full-time and I couldn't do it. I said one day a week is all I can do. So he had to hire two other people.

Riess: Thinking of teaching, what do you recall of Miss Chittendon?

Galli: She was a lovely old lady and she would--you know, you're drawing the model, there it is, and you've got to represent it the way it looks to you. So, I guess everybody had a little different style and she had to accommodate herself to all these different kids.

Riess: Do you remember her being very encouraging?

Galli: Oh absolutely, yes, she was encouraging like anything to me.

Riess: Were the other kids there serious, as serious as you were?

Galli: I really don't know. They were all children of fairly wealthy families. I don't know how to answer that, really I don't, but I liked them all.

Riess: That's an interesting point, that you were there on scholarship and they were not.

Galli: Their families paid their way.

Riess: Now, were these kids mostly Jewish?

Galli: No, no.

Riess: That's an awkward question to ask, but I was gathering that a lot of your contacts and playmates maybe were Jewish.

Galli: Oh, they were. The school was full of Jewish children, yes, because that whole neighborhood was fairly wealthy and I guess, you know, people like the Lilienthals.

Riess: What was it like to go into those more wealthy houses? How did you feel about all of that?

Galli: Oh, well, I was invited all of the time, and there were two women that I loved so much, Mrs. Lilienthal and Mrs. Abenheim. They were wonderful women and they treated me so well! I was in their houses all the time, you know. I'd have supper with the Abenheim family. It was incredible. They were so very nice to me. It's hard for me to describe.

I would go to this one house, the Abenheim house, and he had a lot of lead soldiers that I loved to play with. We'd spread them out and have a war. It was just wonderful. And Mr. Abenheim would take us off on weekends down to Woodside. They had a summer place and I met some wonderful people down there.

Riess: And the Abenheims had a child your age, Peter?

Galli: Yes, he was in my class. He died, unfortunately, a number of years ago. I never understood what happened to him because he just tucked himself away and wouldn't see anybody.

Riess: And the Lilienthals, who was your friend?

Galli: Robert Lilienthal. Ted Lilienthal, his brother, was a year older. I see him occasionally and I saw him at my ninetieth birthday party.

Riess: It's interesting. It was a different experience than your home experience.

Galli: Oh absolutely, just very different, but not so different. It's hard for me to describe, because I liked it at home. You're asking me things that are making me work a little bit.

Riess: Those Saturday classes, did you always get around by yourself, streetcars and things like that?



Galli: Oh, absolutely. Yes.

Riess: What do you remember of the Rudolph Shaefer School of Design?

Galli: I used to pass it on my way to high school because I had to take the Powell Street cable car and it came down the hill past the Lucien Labaudt School. Yes.

Riess: Did you ever have any contact with Lucien Labaudt?

Galli: Not at all.

Riess: Or Rudolph Shaefer?

Galli: Not at all, no. But Spencer Macky, yes, and Lee Randolph, yes. That was later on. I went to art school on my own, later.

I had two and a half years at Lowell, then the rest up in Reno. I finished high school in three and a half years, because they counted my credits wrong.

Riess: Do you have friends from your Lowell High School days?

Galli: Oh yes, but they're no longer around. But, you know, here's what happened--when I got out of grammar school and went to Lowell, the whole class was suppose to go to Lowell. But Galileo had a telescope and they all wanted to go down there. So they all went except a few girls. And I stayed at Lowell.

Riess: So that's part of the history of Galileo High School?

Galli: Yes, they had a telescope there. That was the prime thing that they were talking about all the time. And so the whole class went down there, even the Lilienthals.

Riess: But Lowell is the school that has the great reputation.

Galli: It had a reputation then, too. But I didn't pay any attention to that at all, if you are thinking that maybe I reckoned that in. I didn't.

Riess: What did you think you would like to do with your life when you were like a sophomore in high school?

Galli: That's hard for me to answer. I guess I didn't think about much of that stuff at all, really.

Riess: Did you want to go to college?

Galli: Yes, I would have liked to have gone to college, but art school was more on my mind. I was oriented to art very thoroughly.

Riess: Did Mr. Rosenberg stay in your life with more support?

Galli: Not really. I lost track of him when I went off to Reno. I can't remember. His daughter went to Vassar and I had to help her with some of her art projects. Her name was--I can't think of it. I saw her down at the house, you know, when I visited down there.

### A Time in Reno

Riess: What was the reason that your mother went to Reno?<sup>4</sup>

Galli: Because of the Depression here. She thought, "Well, it'd be better somewhere else." She had some friends up there that said, "Come on up." So she went up and started a grocery store. My older sister stayed here. She was working and self-supporting. So just my younger sister and I went up there. Then my mother remarried, but he died too, so she was left alone, again.

Riess: Was her grocery store successful?

Galli: Yes it was, yes.

Riess: Did you work for her?

Galli: No I didn't, I went to work for a bakery. She wanted me to go to work, and I wanted to go to work, I didn't want to stick around the store. Since she had a grocery store, she was a customer of a bakery, and so she had a little push and shove. So I got a job with a bakery. They started me off, I was a baker's apprentice.

I was working with the cake baker one morning and he gave me a big copper bowl and said, "Mix this stuff up," for a lemon cream pie. I put the lemon juice in there and he turned around and said, "Oh my God, you're going to poison this whole town!" Because that makes copper sulfate! "You'll never make a baker." So the boss put me on a bread-wrapping machine.

I worked at that bakery for a while, and then I went down to the bakery next door and got a job as a driver, bakery driver. Then not long after that Abenheim called me and he had a job for me in the laundry down here because the NRA had just come in.

Riess: In your biographical resume it says that you were a ranch hand too.

Galli: Oh yes. During a summer vacation I got a job. I was watching a faro game in the Bank Club in Reno and a guy came up to me and said, "Want to work, kid?" I said, "Yes, I do." He said, "Get your bed roll and meet me at such-and-such a place." So I did and I went out onto a ranch, as a hand, getting in the hay and doing all, just the chores around the ranch. We had to go out and get wood and stuff like that.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A.

I'd hate to tell you, they put me in a bunkhouse where the roof was caved in. I had an iron bed in the middle of this open space, and I had a bunkmate. It was just incredible, chicken droppings all around, and stuff like that. It was just for a summer.

Riess: Did your mother let you keep the money you made?

Galli: At that time I think I kept it, yes. Gee, that's something that I just don't remember.

Riess: This was the depression. What did you think was going to happen? When were you going to get back to being an artist did you think?

Galli: I didn't know that. I guess I didn't think about it. I must have thought about it.

Riess: Were you sketching all of the time? What were you doing with your art when you were in Nevada?

Galli: I'd draw and keep them. I couldn't sell them. But I was damned interested. There was an artist in town that I admired a great deal. He did charcoal drawings and I liked the way he did them. But that's all I know. I was anxious to get out of Reno, really. So Abenheim called me and I was so glad to get moving out of Reno.

Riess: You mentioned somewhere that you were involved in the 1934 coastal strike.

Galli: Oh, yes. Let me see if I can construct that. I didn't have anything to do with the strike, but I was around here and I had to--. There were a lot of incidents. In driving that laundry truck I was always stopped by squads of people--you know, you weren't suppose to be doing anything.

Riess: You were crossing a picket line or something?

Galli: Well, that's what they thought, but I wasn't, really. We were a laundry, so we were the only ones that were allowed to be on the street. But these guys--nobody realized that, so they'd try to waylay you. I avoided any trouble, but it was very spooky. So I had to leave town. I went up to see my mother in Reno until the strike was over.

Riess: The other thing that was happening around that time was the federal art project.

Galli: I had no connection at all with that. I was working by that time. I was up at Patterson and Hall. I was hired out of art school.

### California School of Fine Arts and Other Artists, Influences

Riess: Now, how was it that you were able to go to the California School of Fine Arts?



- Galli: Because I saved every damn nickel I could. I paid my own way. I would debate whether to buy that candy bar or not, you know, just like that. It all had to go into the pot for going to art school. That was my big passion, really.
- Riess: How was the experience at the California School of Fine Arts different? Was art changing? How was it when you went back?
- Galli: Well, it was changing. The last instructor I had was Maurice Sterne and he was an avant-garde artist.
- Riess: Which means what?
- Galli: He was different than anything we were doing. He's the one that told me to get a job. He heard somebody say something that fit my capacities. So I went down to see them, and it didn't turn out to be anything at all. But the next thing I knew I got hired by this outfit that came up to see what students were promising. They picked me out and I went to work for them.
- Riess: This was after only a year of art school?
- Galli: I had paid my way for a semester and I think I was in my second semester when this happened.
- Riess: When you enrolled in art school, what had you wanted to do as an artist? Be an easel painter? An artist in a garrett?
- Galli: No, I wanted to earn a living. I took a class in commercial art and it was oriented to earning a living. When I got that job all my student friends said, "Oh my God, you can't go to work for them. They're 'commercial!'" I didn't think about that at all because I had to earn a living, really. I needed money. So that was an easy out for me. I liked painting, but I didn't have any real preconceived ideas about what it should be. Do you follow me at all?
- Riess: Did that plague you off and on?
- Galli: Not a bit, not a bit. I was happy with my career. I had a wonderful career. In retrospect it seemed wonderful to me. I worked my tail off, really, I had so many things to do. I just had to do every conceivable thing.
- Riess: I guess the question I should ask is, Did you do what you wanted to do? As if there was a kind of essential something inside that you wanted to do.
- Galli: Well yes, I was doing exactly what I wanted to do.
- Riess: When I ask a question does your mind paint a picture? If I'm talking to you about school, do you "see" school?
- Galli: Yes I do, visually, yes. Oh absolutely, yes indeed I do. I picture the classroom as it was and all the people.

Riess: It's a wonderful memory tool isn't it?

Galli: I guess it is, now that you mention it, I guess it is. You're making me think an awful lot.

Riess: Has music been a part of your life?

Galli: Absolutely, good God, yes. I love symphonic music, really, and that came from the Abenheims. They liked music and I loved it too. They'd play music at home.

Peter Abenheim was a wonderful guy, and for a period he was on television. He ran a children's program called Captain Fortune.

Riess: Do you have recollections of the old Gumps, the store?

Galli: Oh absolutely. I would stop at Gumps and look in the window and see Maynard Dixon's work. He was a favored guy there. He was one of my favorites too. But at that time the galleries that I went to--you know, I went to the Legion of Honor and to the de Young museum, and that was the extent of my gallery visiting. I think that later on when I went to art school a second time I started going to galleries.

Riess: And what were the commercial art galleries?

Galli: There weren't any around. I exhibited my commercial work at the [San Francisco] Museum of Modern Art with a show they had there for commercial artists. But that's all, really.

Riess: And Gumps?

Galli: Well, they had a gallery there, but I never went to it until later on, later years. I'd stop by their windows at night. They'd have lights on and they had these wonderful paintings in the window.

Riess: That's interesting. Here are some names of artists you might have known--I'd like to name some names--this is like a little game. Xavier Martinez?

Galli: I don't know him at all. My wife was a student over at [the California College of] Arts and Crafts and I think that's where he was.

Riess: Ralph Stackpole?

Galli: Oh yes, I knew him. One of my teachers sent me down to see him and he had just come back from Mexico, working with Diego Rivera, and he was encouraging me like crazy. He gave me a Chinese pen that had a glass point on it and he said, "Draw, draw, draw." He was wonderful. He was down on the Montgomery Street at the time. He had a studio down on Montgomery Street. It was in the back of a storefront somewhere.

Riess: So he was very encouraging.

Galli: Oh God he was, indeed.

Riess: Had you taken a portfolio to him or something?

Galli: I can't remember that, really. It's just that one of my teachers recommended me to go to see him, and I called him up and he said, "Come on down," so I went.

Riess: I want to make sure that we don't miss any of your teachers. Was Otis Oldfield one of them?

Galli: Yes, and as a matter of fact I came with Otis Oldfield across--we visited the Kent people here. But I wasn't in his class for very long.

Riess: Did you know Adeline Kent?

Galli: I got to know her later, when we moved here, but I didn't know her before.

Riess: Wasn't she married to a Howard?

Galli: Bob Howard, yes, but I didn't know them well. I knew Roger Kent well and Bill Kent, when I bought a house here. I never met Bob Howard.

Riess: How about Gottardo Piazzoni?

Galli: Yes, he was there. I just loved that guy. I went out on a class with him too and he--actually, he's the one that brought us over here, not Otis Oldfield. Otis Oldfield--he was teaching school, so of course I knew who he was, and I'd go into his class to see what was going on, but I didn't take any classes with him. But Piazzoni, I did take a class with him, and he's the one that brought us over here.

Riess: Would you say that he influenced your style?

Galli: No, not at all, not at all, but I admired his color sense. I loved those murals in the [San Francisco Public] Library. I would look at them all the time, the grand simplicity of them. They're absolutely wonderful.

Riess: Speaking of murals, you know the Maxfield Parrish murals at the Herbst, and at the Sheraton Palace.

Galli: Well, I admired what he did. I used to see calendars all the time and I always liked what he did. He was--as far as I was concerned, he was beyond my scope.

Riess: Why?

Galli: A lot of reasons, I just can't think--because it seemed impossible for me to get interested, the way that he got interested, in all the stuff.. But gee whiz, he put that stuff together so very well. I admired him a lot, but I didn't want to emulate him at all.

Riess: Who would you have wanted to emulate?

Galli: Well, that's a question I have to think about. My influences have always been on the classical things, you know, the Piero della Francescas and the--

Riess: Mantegnas?

Galli: God, yes.

Riess: And you knew that work?

Galli: Well no, it's only when I went to Italy that I recognized Mantegna and Piero della Francesca. I lived there for twenty-seven years.

Riess: But you didn't have a grounding in art history?

Galli: No, not at all. At art school Lee Randolph gave a couple of lectures one time on the history of art, but they slid by me, you know. I would read a lot about art. That I did. I did an awful lot of reading. I remember very clearly reading about that woman artist that did such wonderful pictures of children [Mary Cassatt]. And the way she did it, that's what fascinated me. How she came to do that, what made her arrive at those solutions.

Riess: So you didn't have to have all that historical background, somehow?

Galli: I think I accumulated some of that, really, as time went on, because I did a lot of reading.

Riess: Now, other contemporaries--Edward Borein?

Galli: Oh yes. Borein is a cowboy artist, and I have a friend who is a collector of his. He's just wild about--he wanted to buy my early California things and I didn't want to sell them to him. My feeling about Borein is that he was on the scene and he was privy to all the knowledge of that, that I just haven't any idea of.

Riess: Were you friends with any of the group that was known as the Society of Six?

Galli: Oh, Nancy Boas, her book, I read that all the time.<sup>5</sup> I keep it in the car. She writes so well! And she's such a lovely lady. Last night I was looking at Seldon Giles. It's interesting to me, because his paintings are nice and loose, and Margaret Mondavi wants me to loosen up.

Riess: That's so interesting. You've had a couple of shows up there at the Mondavi Winery.

Galli: Yes I have, yes. She wanted me to have more but I was tied up with the Brookings Gallery on a contract that wouldn't allow me to exhibit with anybody else.

Riess: Oh. And she wants you to loosen up.

Galli: Yes.

Riess: Would you loosen up if you had a couple of martinis before you started to paint?

Galli: [laughs] I don't know. I haven't tried that ever.

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<sup>5</sup> *Society of Six: California Colorists*, by Nancy Boas, Bedford Arts, 1988.

Riess: Do you drink? Wine?

Galli: I drank wine, but my family never did drink a lot and so I just never drank a lot. I got drunk once at art school. They had the Parrilla, and I went out and bought a pint of whisky and drank it down! Then all of the sudden--it didn't hit me right away, but then I collapsed on the floor while everybody was dancing around me. Some of my friends looked down at me and said, "My God, what are you doing down there, Stan!" So that was it, yes, never anymore.

Riess: How about some of the others in the Society of Six, like Louis Siegriest?

Galli: I knew him. I'd see him around on Montgomery Street. He dealt with commercial artists too. He was a friend of Maurice Logan.

Riess: Were any of these commercial artists?

Galli: Yes, oh sure. Maurice Logan was the prime one, and then he had a firm, Logan and Cox, and that was two doors down from our establishment. So Siegriest would go to visit him, and now that I'm reading that *Society of Six* I can see where they would be together a lot. That makes sense to me now. I was introduced to Lou over a period of years, and I'd see him once in a while and I knew who he was, but I didn't know his background.

Riess: And Armin Hansen?

Galli: I knew his work and I liked his etchings an awful lot. He was an etcher and he lived down south somewhere. Carmel.

Riess: Carmel was a hotbed of art, wasn't it?

Galli: Yes it was. I didn't have any contact there at all except we went there sporadically, just for holiday, just for a day or two. I didn't see any artists down there. I didn't know any artists. I knew one fellow that lived down there and I can't think of his name. I guess I didn't know him very well, but when I start to think about it, I knew I knew somebody down there.

Riess: When you were at the Art Institute, what kinds of things were students doing? Were they beginning to do some abstractions and expressionist things?

Galli: I can't remember anything like that at all.

Riess: Can you think of anybody who you thought was really doing far out stuff?

Galli: Not really. During the time I was there, Hassel Smith was one of my classmates, and he was a little far out. At the time he was doing what we all did, but as the years went on I could see that he had moved into what was going on at the time there. He lives in England now.

Riess: Did people go to Paris to study?

Galli: Nobody that I know did that, but Paris of course was the place. You talk about Paris and, you know, it's magic.



Riess: Where do you think you first heard of Van Gogh? How did Van Gogh enter your life?

Galli: I was aware of him right away, but when I say right away, that's all relative. He began to hit the scene pretty early.

Riess: Irving Stone wrote his book *Lust for Life* in 1936, and that introduced Van Gogh to many people, I think.

Galli: Oh yes, I had read that. I guess that's the first time I had heard of him.

Riess: When you read about someone painting in the south of France, or the South Seas, did you yearn for that?

Galli: I don't know what my feelings were. My yearning was always to do the best I could with what I had, with what my capabilities were. I didn't get much chance to experiment because I was busy as hell doing assignments all the time. Now I'm trying to experiment.

Riess: Did you know the photographers Dorothea Lange and Imogen Cunningham?

Galli: I was aware of them, and I was aware of Ansel Adams--in fact, I met him a couple of times. He is pretty wonderful, really.

Riess: You mean as a person, or what he did?

Galli: What he did. I didn't get to know him well enough to analyze him as a person. The only thing I remember about him was that he played the piano with--he had something on one hand. I can't remember what he did with that one hand, but it was amazing.

### **Hired by Patterson and Sullivan, and Hall**

Riess: Now, you were hired out of school. What was that firm?

Galli: Patterson and Hall. Well, Patterson and his partner--they changed the name of the place, it was Patterson and Sullivan. Both Patterson and Sullivan came up to the school and saw what I was doing, and they left word that I was to call them if I was interested at all. Well, I called them, and I got a job down there.

Riess: And where did they see what you were doing?

Galli: Well, my work was hanging in an exhibit. So they wanted to talk to me to see if I'd be interested at all. I guess they saw something that sparked their interest. I can't remember what the heck they saw. I guess it was a lithograph. I had done a lithograph of two hikers up in the mountains, and it was pretty romantic looking.

If I find it, I'll drag it out, because I have a lot of these things. I keep finding all this stuff. Today I found a whole box full of drawings that I didn't know I had! I'll see if I can dig them out for you. I think I know where they are but I'm really pretty dumb about things like that. They're up in the attic and I just can't climb up there. I'll get my son to do that for me.

Riess: Lithography? Did you like the printmaking process?

Galli: Oh, absolutely, yes. It was fascinating, really. But it wasn't something I could-- . It was laborious for one thing, and I had to get cracking. I had to do some commercial work and that was always on a time basis. You had deadlines. I took some print making here recently but I had to stop because I couldn't get to the press. The press was always busy. It was too big a class, you know. I was doing monotypes. That interested me.

Riess: The two hikers in the lithograph, who were they? Who were your models?

Galli: They were out of my head.

Riess: And can you explain for us what is in your head that you can do this.

Galli: Well, it's training. It's like horses--I looked at horses, and I could draw them, but I needed help. Fred Ludekens was very helpful because he learned how to draw horses beautifully.

Riess: Where did those hikers come from? It was 1938, you were twenty-six years old, had you been hiking in the Sierras so you knew what it looked like?

Galli: Oh absolutely! I took a backpacking trip. Oh God, I just hiked all over. When I was in Reno I'd go up into the mountains.

Riess: How did you learn how to articulate the body, the movement?

Galli: Well, you visualize something. You have to transpose it in your mind and you have to construct it, and you just do that.

Riess: Did you take drawing material with you when you were hiking?

Galli: I did sporadically, whenever it moved me. When I decided I wanted to paint I would do that. It's awfully hard to recall why I did these things.

Riess: At that time had you sold any of your art?

Galli: No, I hadn't. I had a friend who asked me to do a painting for them, so I did that and got paid for it. But that's about all. I hadn't sold anything until I started working. As far as paintings are going, I never sold any paintings at all until I got back from Italy.

Riess: Did you throw away a lot in the process?

Galli: Oh God, the whole place is just littered with things! Look here, I pulled out this photograph of my studio in Italy. That's just some of the sketches on the wall, just a few of them.

Riess: Patterson and Sullivan--what was your job going to be? What were the terms?

Galli: Well, forty dollars a month, I think. I became a partner in the firm in short order, so I got more than that I guess. It was Fran that got forty dollars a month.

Riess: What was their clientele and their business?

Galli: They had a pretty big outfit. They had a photographer, and typesetting. They serviced advertising agencies. They were an art service.

They had one client, Safeway, that I did a whole stack of drawings for. I would write them out. I just had a stack about that high, of little drawings of food, things that had to do with food. I just wrote those out, my God, I just did tons of those.

Riess: What do you mean you "wrote" them out?

Galli: I draw so quickly. They were more or less cartoons. They were caricature.

Riess: Was this for newspaper advertising?

Galli: No, this was for a magazine that Safeway was publishing. It was an in-house magazine. They put me on that to service them. So I started out that way, and I did a million of those drawings. Then it just progressed from then on, but they were all newspaper drawings, no color at all. That's what I missed. There was no color in San Francisco at the time. We only had the agriculture clients, and that's about all. Color would be--they had still life artists that would do still lifes of food and that would be in color. But the other stuff was all black and white. So I had to just draw, draw, draw.

Riess: And the still life color artists, were they part of Patterson and Hall?

Galli: Yes, they had a variety of artists there: still life artists, cartoonists, people that pasted up stuff. Fran was on the paste-up brigade and she worked with a re-toucher. They had re-touchers, you know, that worked on photographs, and she was in that department. Then they had a photography department. Haines Hall was the senior artist.

Riess: Sounds like a very big operation.

Galli: Well it was, and they made a lot of money. They were the prime ones. Logan and Cox was the next one. They weren't quite as big.

Riess: Who were the ad agencies?

Galli: Well, McCann Erickson; J. Walter Thompson; Foote, Cone and Belding.

Riess: These were both East and West Coast.

Galli: Yes.



Riess: And Patterson and Sullivan clients?

Galli: It was only western clients.

Riess: Tell me about a typical day. Did you have to wear a suit and tie?

Galli: [laughter] No you didn't. You'd get them messed up with all the materials you were using. I can't remember what the heck I wore but, you know, just casual.

Riess: Did you work at a slant table?

Galli: Yes, at a slant table just like this.

Riess: Sitting down?

Galli: Yes, no stand-up painting.

Riess: And did you really have to crank it out?

Galli: Well, you didn't crank it out. Those little drawings I told you about, I cranked those out, but you had to be very deliberate about other things. I just had to work my tail off with these things.

Riess: Where were they located?

Galli: The first location was on lower Pine Street at Sansome. Then they moved up the street on Bush. They bought a building, 425 Bush. That was the last location. They had the top floor and they rented out the other floors.

Riess: And your wife, Fran. When and where did Fran enter the picture?

Galli: I can't think of the year. She just appeared [at Patterson and Hall] and she was good looking. [laughs]

Riess: She's still good looking.

Galli: And she's a very decent gal. She came to work there, and I really cottoned onto her right away. We started dating, and then we split up. We were separated for about a year and I started seeing other girls, and they just—I had to come back to her. She had all the stuff that I wanted. We married in 1941.

### **Courtship of Frances Salvato**

Fran came to Patterson and Sullivan shortly after I had started there. She was put to work in a back room as a helper to photo retoucher Sig Beartown. He was an older man and quite a character. He would use

an airbrush to retouch photos and there were many to do. He would play tunes with his airbrush by putting his finger over the point of the airbrush--an amusement for him. He had to retouch drawings also. One classic example occurred when Fran had been there for some time. I had done a drawing of a baseball team of kids for "Skippy Peanut Butter." I made all the kids left-handed and Fran had to change the players to right-handed players. I can't remember how she did it. I suppose she airbrushed out the glove and put it in the other hand.

I started dating Fran after a bit. I was able to take her to plays that I got seats for free. Early on I was approached by a man who published a theatre magazine called *San Francisco Life* to do cover pictures. His name was Norbert Frentrup. He and his brother published the magazine and it was given to everyone who bought a ticket to see whatever play was being staged. They carried a lot of advertising in the magazine and earned well. I did this work for free and was compensated by two free seats for each play. It was good for me because it showed a variety of things I could do. The illustrations were in black and white. It was good exposure and resulted in my getting work, which pleased Patterson and Hall. I carried that on for several years and enjoyed it a lot. Those things were done on my own time and didn't interfere with my work at P & H. All in all, it was a lovely affair and afforded me a great place to take dates.

Fran was not the only one, but as time went on Fran became the one who received the most attention from me and my love. That long hallway to where my studio was was a great place for us to smooch for a moment and it became pretty apparent that it would end up in marriage.

Haines Hall remarked to me that I didn't have an automobile. He had just bought a new one and suggested that I buy the Ford coupe that he replaced with the new one. \$200 was the price and I bought it.

In the meantime, I was dating Fran exclusively and since she lived in the Berkeley part of Shattuck Avenue, I would drive her home after a date. I had to ask her dad if I could marry Fran and he said, "Yes." Then commenced a process that I didn't know anything about. The family got completely involved. I had to get squared away with the Catholic church which meant seeing a priest at the North Beach "edifice." I did that for a month or so and got the blessings of the church.

We were married in a Berkeley church with all of our families in attendance. My best man was James Smith who had worked at Patterson and Hall and who was an artist. I can't remember who the bridesmaids were. We took off in a shower of rice, our destination was Inverness Lodge. We spent our first night there and the following day took off for Arizona and the hinterlands. We made it to the Grand Canyon and stayed there for two days and then on to the hinterlands.

## The Commercial Illustration Business

- Riess: Back to Patterson and Hall. You have said, "After a brief but intense period, I was made a partner in the firm." You were quickly made a partner? Why? It sounds like they had a lot of people working there.
- Galli: Well, because I was able. I was a drawing card for them. People wanted my work. The advertising agencies were beginning to like what I did.
- Riess: Could you see how you were better than other people? Could you tell that?
- Galli: I couldn't tell that at all. I just don't know the ingredients. I guess I have never thought too much about what I do, really.
- Riess: Why did they make you a partner though, because you couldn't draw anymore if you were a partner?
- Galli: Oh well, I was a working partner. Haines Hall was working. He was a partner and he was working every day. He could draw like you'd never believe.
- Riess: As a partner, what were your different jobs?
- Galli: I just had to be there, that was all. No decision making at all.
- Riess: Oh. I thought it meant that you were at the marketing end or something.
- Galli: No, no. They made me a partner because I was a drawing card, I guess. They made another young man a drawing partner, too, at the same time. So there were two of us. There were four of us partners--Paterson and Haines Hall, myself and [Bruce] Bomberger.
- Riess: Have these people become big names in illustrating?
- Galli: Bomberger was on the *Saturday Evening Post* at the same time I was. And I hired him on the Weyerhauser thing, but he fizzled out.
- Riess: I was interested in something Norman Rockwell said in the Walt Reed book about illustrators to the effect that ad agencies had become patrons for illustrators in the 1920s-1930s and corrupted them with the temptations of big budgets.
- Galli: Well, gee whiz, that's a funny thing to say about illustrators, really, isn't it? "Corrupted." What do they mean?
- Riess: "A new patron for the illustrator became a powerful influence in the field at this time--the advertising agency. Its influence was a mixed blessing. To many illustrators, including myself, I feel that it was a corrupting one. The temptation of their big budgets took away the kind of integrity that earlier artists, like Howard Pyle, had brought to their work. One could

easily become too busy or too dependent on the income from painting for one product after another to afford to take on more worthy projects, such as a mural or an important book.”<sup>6</sup>

Galli: Well, that’s true, that’s true. Yes, he’s right. He’s a prime example of it.

Riess: Did he end up working for ad agencies?

Galli: Yes he did. Well, he worked for the *Saturday Evening Post*. He did a lot of wonderful covers, but he finally, when the *Post* folded up, he had to look for other sources of work. So that’s what he’s talking about, I guess. But gee whiz, he’s in the pantheon of artists in his own right. And you know, he’s full of bull because he liked what he was doing. He’s a very folksy guy. I knew him.

Riess: I bring it up because we may keep coming back to this in talking about commercial illustration.

Galli: Well, yes, it’s gotten a bad name, really, commercial illustration.

Riess: Is it part of the definition of an illustrator that he be someone who can do it out of his head, that he doesn’t need to have a model?

Galli: Oh no, that isn’t so at all. There are any number of illustrators that use models and others that don’t.

I sparingly used models for my illustration work because of a need to achieve convincing realism. It seemed expected of you at the time. But now things have changed and illustration has gotten more interpretive and seems to achieve the same goal and with added spirit.

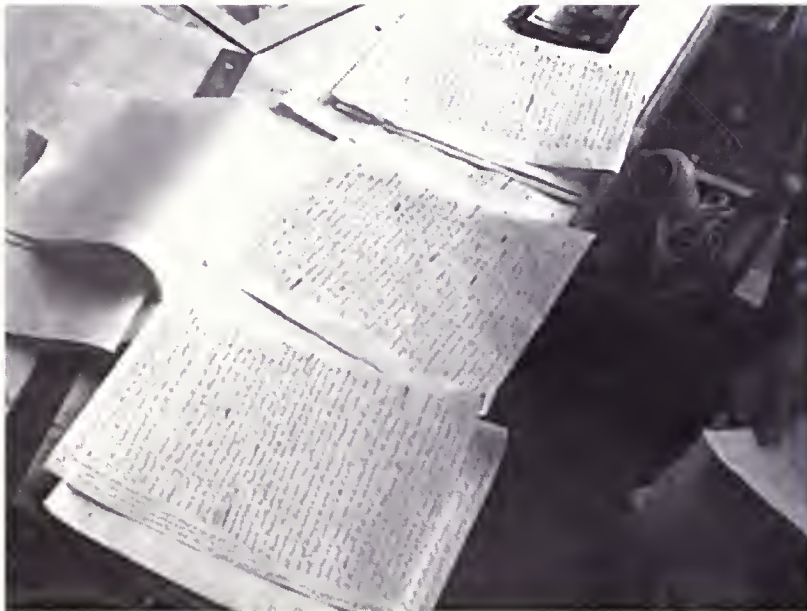
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<sup>6</sup> p. 112, *The Illustrator in America, 1880-1980*, by Walt and Peggy Reed, The Society of Illustrators, 1984.















“Graf Zeppelin over San Francisco on Nonstop Tokyo to Los Angeles Leg of Historic 1929 World Flight,”  
Nut Tree Historical Aviation Art Collection, 1969.

*“This was commissioned by the Nut Tree, and in 1969 I took it to Rome with me and did it there. I was planning to go to Germany for research but found out that there was a Graf Zeppelin museum in Paris, so we started for Paris on a route up the coast of Italy. At the time it was a two-lane road, and a laborious drive behind large trucks grinding their way up grades. When we reached Macon I was exhausted. At that point we decided that Paris was not achievable and we stopped at a chateaux that sold wine. They suggested that we stop at Solutre, a small town close by, and we did that and found wonderful accommodations and great food and we stayed three elegant days in that gem of a resort hotel.*

*“Fran had saved some money for Paris and a fancy couture. She suggested that we use that money for a meal at the famous “Le Pyramide” restaurant that was not too far away. eith some driving and asking we found it and had a meal that was memorable, and huge with many courses. From there we made our way back to Rome. I finished the painting in my studio there with information supplied by a friend in Germany and some photos that Haines Hall sent me of a ferry boat that plied the Bay to Sausalito and that showed the San Francisco skyline.”*



## II A CAREER LAUNCHED: POST-WAR, TRAVELS, SATURDAY EVENING POST

[Interview 2: April 5, 2002]

### Art Center School, Los Angeles

Riess: You also received some training at the Art Center School [now College] of Design, Stan?<sup>1</sup>

Galli: Yes, I took a summer off from work and went down there, and they wanted to keep me there. The director was an old advertising man, and he knew the value of keeping good students around. It developed his school, and that's what he did. He just got all the best. You couldn't get in that school unless you passed a test.

Riess: What has become of the school?

Galli: I don't know. Craig Ellwood designed a new school for them in Pasadena. It's a marvelous building. It's in the form of a bridge over a canyon. Craig Ellwood was my neighbor in Italy, too. I got to know him pretty well but I never saw the art school.

Riess: Where was it when you went?

Galli: It was in Los Angeles, right in town, right near Westwood Park.

Riess: And it had such a reputation that you knew that a summer would be good?

Galli: Oh yes, a summer would do me good down there. And it was good, my God. They were very definitive, you know. They made you work and I was willing to work, believe me. We had one drawing instructor that made you really define what you were looking at, to look at a nose and understand it, understand its construction. And the eyes, and all that kind of stuff.

Riess: Which you hadn't really gotten from your various other classes.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix K.

Galli: Not really, no. It was wonderful, really. I learned an awful lot there. I was learning all the time. That's the way I was constructed.

Riess: Did L.A. have a big impact on you?

Galli: Well, I can't answer that. I just immersed myself in the school, in the students, and that's all. I don't remember much about L.A.

Riess: The fact that you were closer to Hollywood?

Galli: Oh God, that had no meaning for me at all.

Riess: I wondered if animation was an interest ever?

Galli: No, not ever, no.

Riess: Is there a relationship between cartooning and animation and commercial illustration?

Galli: Absolutely, yes there is. You work at attitudes when you are working with people. You have to draw attitudes. The attitudes make all the difference in the world, you know, body language.

Riess: How do you express the attitudes?

Galli: Well, you become like a movie director. You begin to visualize what's supposed to happen. When somebody asks you a question, how do you react? Is it surprise, or is it just bland, or whatever? Attitudes have always been a fetish of mine.

Riess: Have you been a fan of comic book art?

Galli: When I was a child, yes. Katzenjammer Kids used to amuse me because they'd get into all kinds of mischief. I used to like to look at the—we'd call them the funny papers. I'd climb into bed with my mother and dad and I'd look at the Sunday paper.

Riess: Did you try to imitate that kind of drawing?

Galli: No I didn't, really, but it crept into my work. I told you that when I started at Patterson and Hall they had me working on a Safeway magazine that had to do with food. And I would make all these cartoons. God, I made a stack of them, and they sold them all!

Riess: In this case, when you say cartoon, does it mean something amusing always?

Galli: Well, yes, it was always amusing. For instance, I remember one drawing I made where they had a guillotine chopping asparagus, you know, just a guy on the side chopping with a guillotine. He'd pull a rope and the blade would come down and chop off the end of the asparagus.

Riess: That's a real extra skill. That's not just drawing.

- Galli: I suppose you can say that, but attitudes, that was my specialty. So it crept into my illustration work too. When I illustrated I had to get it exactly right.
- Riess: When you were at Patterson and Hall, were you totally on your own? When a job came in, did it come straight to you?
- Galli: It came to me because they wanted me. I worked awfully hard at satisfying the problem, working out what was needed.
- Riess: And was it was you who would you have the discussion with the ad agency?
- Galli: Occasionally. We had salesmen who would bring the work from the ad agency. Every once in a while I would go over myself, too, because they wanted me to come over and talk about it. That was unusual. They didn't like the artists traveling around the ad agencies.
- Riess: Why?
- Galli: Well, I guess it diminished their power. But it was important because I became a partner in the firm very shortly after, and then I was a part of the establishment, so it didn't matter very much.
- Riess: Did you have to get into a suit and tie then?
- Galli: No, no.

### War Years, Bremerton, Washington

- Riess: Okay then, pretty soon along came the war.<sup>2</sup> What is your war story? Were you drafted?
- Galli: No, I wasn't drafted. I got called by a friend of mine who was down in Honolulu. I had hired him and recommended him for a job, and he got a job in Honolulu. That was Jim Hastings. His father called him in Honolulu and said, "Trouble is brewing. You'd better come home." This was before the war, before Pearl Harbor. His father was a planner and estimator up in Bremerton Navy Yard in Bremerton, Washington. He called him up there and so he went.

Then he called me when the war started and said, "You'd better come on up here. We need you." I thought, "Well gee, I'll be drafted and I don't want to be in the army," because I had been seeing all these war films with trenches and people being stabbed with bayonets, and I wanted to be in the navy. So this was a good entree into the navy, working with the navy.

One week after Pearl Harbor I was on my way up there. I had a brand new car, I bought it just before the war, and I got up to Bremerton with this thing and everybody wanted to buy it. It was a brand new automobile, a Ford station wagon. It was a lovely car.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A.

Riess: You were married at the time?

Galli: Yes, I was married just before that, before Pearl Harbor. We got married in 1941.

Riess: So the two of you went.

Galli: Yes, the two of us went up. And we had a child on the way; Fran was pregnant. The first child, Tim, was born up in Bremerton, a few months later. We were renting a place, and the second child, Tom, came a year after. I thought I would be in the navy by that time, but they had me working at all kinds of things.

Riess: Who's the "they"?

Galli: The admiral and--. I got hired as a painter and--what was the term? Gosh, I can't think of the other term. But I had to be hired through the paint shop to be established correctly. Jim Hastings had married the daughter of the head of the paint shop and we became very close friends. We found an apartment right next door to them. They had a son, Jimmy.

Riess: The paint shop was for painting camouflage?

Galli: Painting ships, painting camouflage and doing all kinds of stuff. I didn't do that, of course, but to hire me they had to do it that way.

Riess: What were they doing with your skills?

Galli: I was working on manuals, training manuals, because they were hiring people that didn't know how to read blueprints. They were hiring all over the country. They'd come from down south and everywhere. They needed people. We had to develop a method for drawing things in perspective that were in scale. So we had to figure that all out. They had to have illustrations that told the story very well.

Riess: That sounds hard to do.

Galli: Well, it was very difficult, really, but we did it. I think I have some of these things around. I could show you.

Last night I had Tom looking for some of this stuff we've been talking about. I was getting a lot of old drawings out, old paintings, things that I did when I went up to Reno, and things before that. Good God, I used to be all around the city, just sketching all the time, making water colors and, gee whiz, I was doing all kinds of work. We looked and he couldn't find it. But in my mind, I've got an archive in there and I have a feeling they are in that. It's a mess. I have to dig an awful lot of stuff out. I'll do it though.

Riess: To come up with one of these examples of the manuals for the navy would be great.

Galli: Yes, oh absolutely, I think I know where they are. I'll do that after this show that's coming up [Galli & Galli, Vacaville, April 2002].



- Riess: In order to do these perspective drawings you had to figure things out? You hadn't done anything like this before?
- Galli: I never had done anything like that, but you know, I was a problem solver, both Jim Hastings and I. He was a marvel--he could draw like crazy and he could draw ships like I could never do. But I had to do that, I had to draw ships. I'll show you. I have a drawing of a battle ship from the keel up. I had to learn all the terms they had.
- Riess: Was that where you had your entire military service then?
- Galli: It turned out that way. I thought I'd be into the navy, but no, they needed me. The admiral wouldn't let me go. I wanted to go join the OSS and he said, "I understand you want to leave here." I said, "I sure do, Admiral." He said, "Well, we need you," and that was the end of it.
- Riess: What was your title or rank or whatever?
- Galli: I didn't have a rank. I was a civilian and I was being used very much. It was incredible.
- Riess: What do you remember of the bomb at the end of the war--where you were and what you felt about it?
- Galli: Well, gee whiz, I knew the war was over and I was glad, that was my feeling. My boss was Lieutenant Commander Adams and I said, "Look, Commander, I want to go home." He said, "Well, you can," so we packed up and left. I had to go see the admiral too and he didn't put up any obstacles.
- Riess: And home was back down here?
- Galli: Back down here, yes. I wanted to get back to work.

### Marriage, Travels, Sausalito

- Riess: When you and Fran married, did you kind of negotiate what would happen to her art career?
- Galli: No, we didn't discuss that at all. She became a housewife and she was glad to do it. We started raising a family right away.

I took her on a honeymoon. She hadn't been traveling at all. We made it to the Grand Canyon and stayed there for two days and then on to the hinterlands. Fran had never been out of California and it was all new to her. I hadn't traveled all that much either, but had been to more places than she. Anyway, we got to the edge of the Arizona desert. When we told people that we were going into the interior, they were aghast. This is the flood season they said, there are flash floods in May and dangerous.



Somehow they didn't convince me and so after a night's sleep in a motel in Tuba City, we took off on the dirt road that led into the desert. Nary a car in sight. A wind came up and we were in a sandstorm. The sand got into everything and I found that my brakes weren't holding when I tried to stop. I did stop and was out in front of the car and an Indian turned up out of nowhere. He wanted to help and he signified that by grabbing the bumper with lifting motions. Fran in the meantime was scared as hell and grabbed a crow bar that I had laying on the floor and was ready to bash the Indian. It was not necessary because I convinced the man that I didn't need help.

I got in the car and started it up and the Indian wandered off into the void. We went on, still no cars, a storm was visible miles away. We finally came to a ranger station. The lone occupant heard us coming and was outside waiting for us. He was so glad to see someone that he invited us for dinner and to stay the night. We accepted and had a visit with a lonely man whose wife was in a hospital.

From there we went on to Oraibi, a trading post. It was a store that served the Indians on a barter system. It carried groceries and such, gasoline that was in steel drums. We bought a lovely Navajo rug, saddle blankets that appealed to me, and some other things.

We looked at the map and found that any sizable place was too far away, so we decided to head back the way we came and get to Tuba City, spend the night in the most dismal motel I've ever been in, and head for home.

Fran reminded me that the incident of the sand storm occurred on our way back from Oraibi and not the way I told it. The sand storm hit us on the way back. Such is my stroke-damaged brain operating.

We got back to the Bay Area to Fran's parents' house and then we looked for an apartment in San Francisco. We found one high on Jones St. When Jim Hastings and I were living together, moving was a matter of minutes. We stayed on Jones Street for some months and then decided that Sausalito was where we wanted to be. We found a place on Bulkley Avenue in Sausalito that pleased us. Getting all the stuff we had accumulated in a short time was staggering. Dishes, beds and all the wedding presents took the full day to load the car. The blessings of married life were time and energy consuming and I wasn't used to it. What a revelation! If I had to move now, after sixty years of marriage and accumulations, the early years would seem like a breeze.

We made it to Sausalito where we got a dog as a pet and lots of trouble. The dog was a large dog and full grown--a big mistake on our part--but we weathered that, and one day he disappeared for good.

Riess: Why did you go to Arizona? Were you thinking of images of the Southwest? Like Maynard Dixon's work?

Galli: Oh, well yes, the country fascinated me. That's what it was. You hit it right on the head.

Riess: And Sausalito was kind of an art community. Was that one of its attractions for you?

Galli: Well, no. I had lived there with Jim Hastings for a little bit. We had an apartment off the waterfront, just a few houses inland where you had to walk through an alleyway to get to the back house. It was facing the bay, on the east side of Sausalito. We lived there, I can't remember how long, and we used to commute over to the city on the ferry. That was wonderful. I liked that. So when I got married I had to go back to Sausalito. That was the attraction because I liked it so much. We lived on a street back near the Alta Mira Hotel.

Riess: Did you have a studio there?

Galli: No, no.

Riess: Did you know Jean Varda?

Galli: Varda was there but I didn't know him.

Riess: Were you involved with boats?

Galli: Not then, but later on. Jim Hastings was a boat enthusiast. He had a doctor friend who had a boat and I used to go out with them, but I didn't know anything about sailing.

### Magazine Work, Viewed from the West Coast

Riess: Okay, so when the war was over and you were heading home, what did you expect you would be doing?

Galli: I came back to the partnership. I was a partner in the firm by that time. They had me opening an office in Seattle and doing things like that, and that was absolutely not my cup of tea. So after a year or so I decided to leave and go east and look for illustration work.

Riess: What would you say was the effect of the war on the illustrators' world?

Galli: Well, nothing changed. The situation on the West Coast was that at first there was no business here, no publishing houses, during the immediate postwar period. But it all developed, things began to move around. The only business that I got, the only drawings I made, were black and whites for the newspaper. They had to do with food, Safeway, and agricultural products. But I didn't do any still life. We had a still life artist in the firm. I worked on Southern Pacific and Matson Navigation.

Riess: What about *Sunset* magazine?

Galli: Well, *Sunset*, they were operating but I don't think they shot any color at the time. They had advertising from the east and they would insert it in *Sunset* magazine. So I never got to do any color.

Riess: What about California businesses like Del Monte?

Galli: Well, Del Monte, we had that account. We had a still life artist that did still lifes for them.

I had to do Southern Pacific, and you know, I got so I was drawing trains all the time and people on trains and stuff like that. That got boring to me after a while. I wanted to go east because that's where all the publishing was and all the work was. There was a greater variety there.

Riess: But what if you had been able to elbow out the guy who was doing the still lifes?

Galli: I didn't want to do that. I didn't want to do still lifes because I liked to draw people. He was doing arrangements of fruits or vegetables on a plate, or in a can. He was doing all that kind of stuff and that just bored the hell out of me.

Riess: I'm interested in what magazines you might have been looking at at that time. *The New Yorker*, were you a subscriber to that?

Galli: I used to look at it and it fascinated me, but I had no pretensions of working for them. I just wanted to be an illustrator. I admired illustration. At Patterson and Hall we all looked at what the illustrators were doing. But not so much *The New Yorker*. Nobody seemed to want to look at it. The cover art was interesting, but not to the degree that I wanted to get on that because it just seemed like it was very, very strange ideas.

Riess: And *Esquire*?

Galli: [Galli wrinkles his nose] *Saturday Evening Post* was our bible, really, in a sense.

Riess: Did the *Post* evolve, or was it always much the same thing?

Galli: Oh, it evolved with the times. The articles changed. You began to notice a lot of different things. The content was changing all the time, but the look of it never changed much at all. It was the same format all the time: the cover, the illustrations and advertising. The text varied with the times.

### **Norman Rockwell**

Riess: Norman Rockwell, talk about how you see him.

Galli: I got to know him later on and he was a lovely man, really. Just a very gentle sort of fellow. I didn't get to know him all that well.

Riess: Do you know anything about how he learned to do what he did so well?

Galli: Well, it's just that he had an avid interest in people's attitudes, exactly that. You showed me that article.<sup>3</sup> He had some yearnings to paint fine art, and I think he went to Paris to see what he could do. I can't remember how that worked out. Apparently it didn't.

Riess: I think this is what you are referring to. [reading] "To many illustrators, including myself, I felt that it [the advertising agency] was corrupting. One could easily become too busy or too dependent on the income from painting for one product after another to afford to take on more worthy projects, such as a mural or an important book."

Galli: I felt that he liked what he was doing more than he--I'm sure more than he liked the money. But it surprises me that he put it that way. I guess it is a corrupting influence. I always had that feeling, too, that fine arts are a more worthy cause, but I had to earn a living, you know, so you fell into that. I guess it is a corrupting influence, really. He put it well. I quite agree with him.

Riess: Did you have among your friends some starving artists?

Galli: Yes, I did. Oh sure, good gosh, I was down at the Montgomery Block all the time and I used to meet these fellows and they were interesting, but I didn't want their life. I had various experiences.

Riess: Can you think of some of those friends, what styles of art they were working in?

Galli: Well, I'm just trying to think. I can't remember their names. Names elude me an awful lot, especially now that I suffered some brain damage. I can't think of a single person, but their image floats in front of my mind. You mentioned Jean Varda, and I met him, but I didn't get to know him at all. He lived on a ferry boat out there in Sausalito and I went to see his art. It was interesting to me, but that kind of life didn't appeal to me, I guess because I'd been corrupted already. [laughs]

I was feeling important in my own field, there's that too. I was making progress all the time. That's what happens to you. If you are making progress you become satisfied with what you are doing and, you know, you're digging hard all the time and I was solving visual problems, just like this.

### **Mastery, Models, and Photography in Illustration Art**

Riess: Your mastery of perspective and foreshortening, I see it in everything that you do.

Galli: Well, gee whiz, that's elementary! You've got to learn how to do that in order to make things work.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Illustrator in America*, op cit.



Riess: Did you use any particular tools in the foreshortening?

Galli: Not a thing.

Riess: What do I mean by tools? I mean like little boxes that you could look through, or lines.

Galli: I have a projector that enlarges--you know, I make small sketches like this and put them into the projector. If they please me I put them on canvas. But now I find out that I like the sketches better! They're a lot looser.

Riess: David Hockney has written about how he thinks Vermeer did his interiors, optical devices he used. It's interesting.

Do you remember the first Vermeers that you saw?

Galli: I think the first Vermeers that I saw were in Amsterdam. I had a client in Germany and I had to go to Germany. And I had to go to Denmark--I had a client there. On the way down I stopped in Amsterdam and went to the Rijksmuseum and I saw the Vermeers. God, they were wonderful.<sup>4</sup>

Riess: But the Hockney thing leads to a question about the influence of photography. Where does photography fit into this story?

Galli: Most illustrators use photographs. I was working for *McCall's* and I had to get models. Models in San Francisco were not very good at all so I had to go east to shoot models.

Riess: Models of people?

Galli: Models of women. But I got so that I detested doing that so I had to learn how to draw out of my head.

Riess: So how did that work with the photography?

Galli: You'd have a photographer shoot the model and you'd pose her. Models in San Francisco were all doing fashions so they didn't know how to act. I had one girl back in New York, I can't remember her name but I should because she was so wonderful. She could get into anything you wanted. She could act out a situation. I used her quite a bit.

Riess: You could telephone her and have somebody shoot a picture?

Galli: I would telephone in advance and then go back there and shoot.

Riess: And would there be enough budget that you could do that?

Galli: Yes, I was making a lot of money, really. I had no problems with that because I was busy all the time. I had a minimum price of \$1,000 for anything.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C.







Riess: That's interesting. So that's one way that you used photography.

Galli: Yes; I used photographs, but not a great deal.

I worked for *Today's Woman* and *McCall's*. They were the two women's magazines. I can show you a *McCall's* illustration that I have here that I did over, and I don't know why I did it over because it looks perfectly fine to me now. There were two little kids and someone courting on a porch. I had to just sit down and draw it. I didn't use models at all.

Riess: I'm curious, once you have the picture of the two kids on the porch with the courting couple, why wouldn't the magazine use the photograph rather than the illustration from the photograph?

Galli: That's a good question—well, they wanted something hand done, I guess because it was the tradition. It's locked into tradition, yes, I think that's it.

I became known as a problem solver. One of the ways I was doing it was learning how to draw.

Riess: Without the photographs.

### Fred Ludekens

Galli: Yes, without the photographs. Fred Ludekens was the one who could do that. God, he was marvelous.

Riess: He's been a friend from way back?

Galli: Oh absolutely. He lived in New York, he had an apartment on Park Avenue, but he'd come out here because he liked it out here. He'd work at Patterson and Hall. They gave him a studio and he would do his work there. I would watch him making illustrations for the *Post*--he was working for the *Post* at the time. He was a marvelous guy.

I visited him in New York, and the thing that amazed me was he worked in the living room. And they had velvet couches and curtains! But he was the neatest guy! Then he comes in here and can stand this mess! I really liked that guy. He is German, of course, with that kind of name, but he didn't have any of the characteristics of a German except that neatness.

Riess: Why did he move out here?

Galli: Because he just plain liked it. He wanted to be in California because he liked the climate, and he found out that you could be here and still get work. When I went back there they wanted me to stay. All the artists said, "You just can't go back to California, you know, you're too far away." I said, "We've got a telephone." And it worked. Believe me I was busy all the time.

**Widened Horizons, Looking to New York, 1947**

Riess: Now this was the important moment, really, in your career. Tell me how you made that decision to break away. You could have just kept on with Patterson and Hall.

Galli: Well, yes, I had a partnership, and good God I was earning bundles of money. But I wasn't happy there at all. Instead of drawing I was a businessman, and I didn't like that at all. I wanted to go back to New York and ring doorbells, which is what I did.

Riess: When was that?

Galli: Well, I left Patterson and Hall in 1947, and so it would have been around that time, '47, '48.

Riess: Did you and Fran talk a lot about that?

Galli: Well, we talked about it, yes, and she agreed that I should do that. I left her here for three months and went back there and rang doorbells.

Riess: Did it feel risky?

Galli: I didn't think so. I can't remember any of the conversations we had, but it didn't seem to me that—I guess I had to think about the risk. But I was busy here too, so in case I wasn't busy with things from there, I would have enough work here to keep me going. I was working for the *Family Circle* at that time because their agent would come out here, and he hired me to do work before I went back east. *Family Circle* had fiction in it, and so I was illustrating fiction—I was working at illustration before I went east. That got me in the door at *This Week* magazine. The first job I had was for *This Week* magazine. And it was a newspaper supplement that took fiction too.

Riess: When you went to New York, did you have someone you stayed with?

Galli: No, I took a studio. I knew one fellow there that had a studio down on Lexington Avenue. I went there to see him, and he had a friend in another studio who had space, so I went in there. His name was Grant Tigner.

Riess: Grant Tigner? Is he famous?

Galli: No. He married a girl in New York and then he went to England, and when I went to England I saw him there, in London.

He had this little studio, and he had extra space, and so I worked there. I did a *This Week* illustration there. I stayed there for three months. I had that studio, and an apartment on 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

Riess: So you rang whose doorbell?

Galli: Well, I didn't go to the *Post* right away. I thought I wasn't ready for it. When I came home I wrote a letter--I wish I had saved it--a one-paragraph letter. And I sent them some stuff. The next thing you know I got a manuscript in the mail from the *Post*. What a surprise, a special delivery at the front door! My God, I just couldn't get over it. That was a tremendous thing, very significant.

Riess: Ringing doorbells, who did you talk to?

### **True Magazine, Weyerhaeuser Work**

Galli: Well, I went to different magazines and book publishers. I went to *True* magazine. Fred Ludekens was working for *True* and he introduced me when I went back there, and I got work from them right away.

Riess: Story illustration.

Galli: Yes, but they were true stories. I remember I did one job for them where somebody had thrown somebody into the Rhine River. It was a murder thing. I just characterized it by--it was dark, late at night, two characters. They had just dumped this body into the river and I had to show a splash. And you knew damn well what it was, because they had thrown somebody into the river. I had to study the splash.

I went down to the canal here and I started taking the biggest boulders that I could and throwing them into the water and watching very intently to see the formation, the anatomy of a splash. And good God, there was a guy up on a telephone pole and he was transfixed. He was watching me and he said, "What the hell are you doing! I was just going to call the paddy wagon." I said, "I'm studying the anatomy of a splash."

Riess: If you had been able to take a picture of it, would that have worked?

Galli: Well, I guess I was taking pictures too, but then I was watching it very intently because I had to see what the hell was going on.

Riess: That's such a good example for me of how you had to learn.

Galli: Oh absolutely, I had to learn the anatomy of everything! I had to learn the anatomy of animals too, because I started working for Fred Weyerhaeuser. During the war the agency hired me to make ads for the *Seattle Times*, and they knew I was an artist so they hired me to do it. So in my off time I was up in the attic working on this stuff, you know, I'd just work like hell.

Riess: Up in the attic where?

- Galli: In Bremerton. I had to pull a ladder down to get up into the attic. There was a hallway outside our back door and it had a ladder you could pull down and climb up into the attic. So I was up in there all the time.
- Riess: So that's how the Weyerhaeuser work got started, up there.
- Galli: Well, it got started because I did things for the *Seattle Times* and they saw that I could solve visual problems. So the agency got that account and they hired me to do the ads. In 1952 I started the first things. I was down in New Mexico when this thing came and I did the first ad down there.
- Riess: I'm confused. I thought you got started with Weyerhaeuser when you were in Bremerton.
- Galli: No, it was after. I was doing the *Seattle Times* in Bremerton, but right after the war, I don't know how many years, 1952 was the first Weyerhaeuser ad I did, so that's quite a long time after the war.
- Riess: What was the theme that Weyerhaeuser was trying to get across?
- Galli: Tree farming. Yes, indeed. They had so much land and had a system for sustained yield. They'd replant and they had a system for letting the trees reforest themselves. They'd cut over a bare patch and leave it, then go on to the next, and that would re-seed. The seeds would come down and re-seed the clear-cut. But they were big enough to be able to do that. Nobody else could do that.
- Riess: And why did they have to advertise?
- Galli: Because they were bad guys in Washington. They had to throw the hat in the door before they went there. The people that I worked with told me about this, that they had to go back to Washington, and they'd get into discussions there, and my God, they were just the worst kind of "enemies of the environment" because they had cut their way across the nation. But they had so much property that they were able to work out this problem of sustained yield. They got that idea in Germany. They were using that over there because they had so little land they had to figure out some way to keep the forest growing. So they worked out this system of re-seeding.
- Riess: As far as you were concerned, was it an issue one way or the other whether they were good guys or bad guys?
- Galli: Well, yes, yes. When they called me on this I said, "Gee, I don't know whether I want to do it or not." Apparently they told the Weyerhaeuser about this because Fred Weyerhaeuser had to come down here for a meeting, and he was at the Clift Hotel, and he called me and I went up to see him. He said, "I understand you don't want to work for us." I said, "Well, no, gee, in my book you are bad guys." And he said, "Well, look, let me tell you what we are doing." And he told me about it and I believed him.
- Riess: So your illustrations were of animals?



Galli: Well, we discussed that. They wanted to show people up in trees and the fascination of a guy climbing into a tree. I said, "Oh no, my God, you can't do that. Can't we use animals in the trees, and talk about the forest in its beauty?" Well, yes.

Riess: And you had to learn how to do animals.

Galli: I had saddled myself with animals and I had to. I've got all kinds of books on animals, and I had been working for *True* magazine and, of course, they had animals in there too. So I had had some prior experience in studying the anatomy of a tiger and all that kind of stuff.

Riess: If you had an assignment that you were working on for Weyerhaeuser, how much time would you figure you could give to it and how much would you get paid? How did you budget your time?

Galli: Well, the thing is, when I first got the job I said, "Look, I can't do this." They wanted an ad every month. I said, "I can't do that. I'll have to hire someone." I hired Fred Ludekens and he knew how to draw animals better than I did. So I got him and we would alternate, one every other month I would do.

### *Saturday Evening Post*, and Santa Fe Summer

Riess: Now, back to getting started for the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Galli: Yes. I did my first illustration for the *Post* down in Santa Fe. We lived there for a summer, north of Santa Fe, in Pojoaque.

The story is that Fred and I were traveling down there, and on our travels we stopped at a place of a person he knew there. She had just lost her husband. He drove off a cliff. He drank a lot. She had a marvelous place with a swimming pool and everything else, and she needed tenants. I said, "Well, I'll come on down here next summer," and so that's what we did.

We stayed down there for a month. She rented the main house to somebody else that had a lot of money and she had a little Spanish house off to the side and we occupied that and used the swimming pool. We had a lovely time--the two boys had a great time down there. This was 1952, because I did my first Weyerhaeuser job down there and my first *Saturday Evening Post* job down there. So that was it, yes.

Riess: What kind of money is involved in a Weyerhaeuser job or a *Saturday Evening Post* job?

Galli: They paid me \$3,000 for a picture and they wanted to raise it. I didn't want to raise it because by that time Fred Ludekens had left. He had become a partner in Foote, Cone, and Belding because he had worked for them before. So that left me with only one other person that I had confidence in. That was Bruce Bomberger. He was a partner also at Patterson and Hall.



Riess: I'm thinking of it, the faster you are the better it is for you.

Galli: I don't know, I don't think I was that fast, really. I had so much work, and there were deadlines. I had to schedule myself very carefully. But I was in demand and so I could shift things around.

I could always move the *Post*. They would schedule stories that were way in advance, so there was always a little bit of leeway. I'd have to call them once in a while and they'd grant me a little bit more extra time. That allowed me to do some things over again. And some of those are the only things I have left that I can show you.

Riess: What did you have to take in the way of a studio when you would work away from home?

Galli: Just watercolors, you know, just designer's colors. Tubes of designer's colors, that's all I worked on. I worked on the board. I could buy cardboard down there. I was very portable.

Riess: In Pojoaque did you have any encounters with the Pueblo people?

Galli: Just the man that worked for Mrs. Young. We had to take him to one of his ceremonial dances at a tribe he belonged to. I drove him there and stayed there for the festivities and watched everything.

Riess: Did you sketch or photograph the Indians when you were there?

Galli: No, not at all. I didn't want to poke a camera in their face, I just didn't like the idea. I have photographs of Indians and I've referred to those in my work, the features. I was taking a lot of photographs all the time, of course, but I didn't like poking a camera--at the ceremonies, I didn't want to photograph that, at all. I didn't think it was very seemly.

Riess: If I were to look at your work from that period, did it take on a Santa Fe look?

Galli: Not really. No, not really. The Weyerhaeuser thing I did, the first ad down there, it was an eagle flying over a wooded terrain. It was very realistic. The *Saturday Evening Post* story was a western and that didn't show any signs at all. I just did what came to me.

Riess: After awhile, since you were working so much for the *Post*, could you tell them what kind of stories you'd like to work on?

Galli: No. They would send me the stories that they thought would fit me and they'd have suggestions for the illustrations, which I completely ignored. I made roughs of the things that I thought would stop somebody, rough sketches, pencil sketches of what I intended to do, no color, and I'd send the roughs to them. Once in awhile I'd do color if I thought it was necessary, but it was the content of it, the formulation of shapes and things and what people were doing.

Riess: From receiving the story to sending back the final work, how much time did it take?

Galli: Well, the time varied. They'd give you a time period, but if you needed more time you'd call them up, and they were very flexible. I had to call them once in awhile to adjust the schedule

because I had so damn much other work. On the Weyerhaeuser thing they wanted me to do all of them, which were twelve ads a year. I had to get Fred Ludekens to do half of them.

Riess: So you could command any amount of money probably.

Galli: Well, you know, I didn't think about that. Then when Fred became a partner in Foote, Cone, and Belding, I had to get another person. I got my former partner at Patterson and Hall, Bruce Bomberger. But he petered out and I had to get somebody else, finally. They wanted to pay me more and I refused, because I had to have somebody else to do some other work and I didn't want my prices to be higher than his. Jim Dumas is the one I got to do the other six. He did a superb job. He loved the out of doors and was a very able guy.

Riess: Reminds me of Renaissance artists who might have a studio of people to do the detail work. Did you ever get into a situation where you would do only parts of the painting?

Galli: Oh never, never, never. I did the whole damn thing and I did them over if they didn't work out well. You just dig it all out of your mind and do it.

Riess: Were you told how much page space they were going to give it?

Galli: Oh absolutely. You made a rough and they would calculate where the type would go. You left room for the story to start. You laid the page out for them, that's what it was.

Riess: When the stories came, did Fran read them with you? Did you both do that job?

Galli: No, I read them. She had her housewifely duties and she was pretty busy. I guess maybe she read some of the stories. I'd have to ask her that. I have no recollection of that at all.

Riess: I was wondering whether as a fellow artist she became another eye in some situations?

Galli: Not really. She left that up to me entirely.

Riess: No back seat driving?

Galli: No, not at all, really. She's been wonderful, really.

### **Burning the Work**

Riess: You still have the *Post* illustrations?

Galli: Yes. They just bought the reproduction rights and they'd send them [the original illustrations] back. I burned them all up. I couldn't stand looking at them.

Riess: When?

Galli: When they came back. We had a barbecue out there, and I burned them up. My neighbor came over and fished some out and took them.

Riess: Why would you burn them?

Galli: Because, see, I wasn't very smart. I didn't realize that they would have value. I'd look at them and I'd say, "Gee, I could have done that so much better," because I'd see all the mistakes. "Why didn't I do this? Why didn't I do that?" They displeased me.

Riess: I'm surprised. You don't seem to have that kind of temperament to me.

Galli: Really? Well, you don't know me well enough I guess.

Riess: No, I guess I don't. You sit here surrounded by wonderful work that's on its way to an exhibition. Is this the way you tend to see things, "Oh my God, I could do so much better?"

Galli: Well, yes. I look at that one [painting] and I kind of like that now, and I didn't let her [the curator of Galli & Galli Exhibition in Vacaville] take that. But gee, I don't even remember doing that, you know, I'd just write them out.

Riess: Have you noticed with your work that at some point several years later you appreciate it more?

Galli: Yes. I look at these and I wonder why I did them over. For instance, there's a *Post* illustration back there that got into the Illustration Academy, and I did it over. I have that one here. The other one is in the Illustration Academy.

Riess: When you say you "did it over" does that mean that you did it over exactly the same way? What do you mean?

Galli: I just altered the things that bothered me a lot and they are not even noticeable, really, but they bothered me.

Riess: When you did something over was there a mechanical way you could reproduce it so that you didn't have to do it all over?

Galli: Well, I'd put it in the projector and project it onto a piece of board. I'd have to bring it in here and get a little distance away and project it up on that screen there. Then just pencil it in. Then you bring it to the drawing board and work on it with color.

Riess: Is there a kind of trade guild for illustrators?

Galli: I belong to the New York Society of Illustrators. You might call it a trade guild, but it's back there and I'm back here and we're too damn far apart. I don't get involved very much at all. I used to go there all the time when I was traveling east. It was up on 57th Street.

Riess: And what could it do for you?

- Galli: Well, nothing, it's just that you are in a fraternity of other illustrators and your conversations are all about what's going on.
- Riess: Would they help you figure out how to set prices?
- Galli: I think they do that, but I never got into that. I had my own prices and it had to do with being available, because I was so damn busy. I had a minimum of \$1,000 for anybody that would call.
- Riess: I'm lucky to be here today! [laughter]

### **Society of Illustrators and the Air Force Assignments**

- Riess: Was there a San Francisco Society of Illustrators?
- Galli: There is a San Francisco Society of Illustrators. It's a small edition of the New York Society and nowhere near as good, really. I'm a charter member. It's like a fraternity. You know, you fraternize with other artists.

On one trip for the New York Society of Illustrators an Air Force general described for us the recent testing of the hydrogen bomb. It was awesome and inspired an oil painting from me when I got back to California. What I painted was a long picture about 28" x 54" with a B52 bomber disappearing into a night sky and illuminated by a very bright flash behind it.

For the second assignment I chose to do the Strategic Air Command whose general was Curtis Le May. I had to go to command headquarters in Omaha, which I did. Everyone told me that I would be lucky to have five minutes with the General. I did see him and we talked for forty minutes. He assigned a Colonel Tilley to send me to England, Morocco, and Thule, Greenland. I flew to New Jersey and from there to an Air Force base on the west coast of England. There I was put in a DC3 and flown to London. I was the only passenger on that flight in what seemed to me a plane that was designed to carry important brass. Anyway, I landed in London and was met by Colonel Spalding who took me in tow. With Colonel Spalding I visited some of the bases in North England and interviewed non-commissioned personnel. I say non-commissioned personnel because I soon found out that they felt unappreciated. The officers got all the attention. I wrote up a report about this late and submitted it to Colonel Tilley to pass on to General Le May.

Spalding had orders to take me to Morocco. Spalding needed flying time so he flew the DC3 to Southern France and from there to Strategic Air Force base in Sidi Slimane and left me there. I can't remember the base commander's name but he told me that a group was coming from



Homestead, Florida, the next day. Sure enough, the complete squadron droned in. I went out on the tarmac with my camera and was immediately arrested and brought before the Squadron Commander, Colonel Cloyd. The colonel knew who I was and that Le May, his boss, had sent me, so everything was OK. I flew on training missions with the group in tankers that refueled the planes while in flight. I took a position right behind the airman who controlled the fuel nozzle which demanded a lot of skill in maneuvering the nozzle into the nose of a B47. I took a lot of photos of that procedure as well as other flight aspects.

While at the base in Sidi Slimane there was a parade of the French Foreign Legion in Marrakesh that the base commander had to attend and invited me to see. I spent the night at the Hotel Mammunia in Marrakesh, empty of guests at the moment. I breakfasted and then went to see the parade. I was impressed with the tough looking Legionnaires. After the parade I went into a section that I was told was risky to buy some material that Fran had asked me to get. I did find some elegant woolen material that I bought and had packed for me. At the time the smell blended in with all the other strong smells of camels that were everywhere. When I got home with the material, the odor was so strong that when it arrived at the Kentfield post office the postmaster called me to come and get it quickly. I went and got it and took it to a rug cleaner and they only modified the smell. We stored the stuff in a closet. A year later I took it out and the smell had disappeared and we had an elegant coat made from the material.

I spent a week with the B47 Squadron and left for Casa Blanca to go home. The plane I was scheduled for was three hours there for mechanical adjustments. We left for the next stop in the Azores. Again mechanical troubles and a long wait. There were a lot of women who had been to see their husbands that were in the service. These mechanical problems had exhausted them, and I talked to a Portuguese soldier, who was a guard, to let me take the women into town. He spoke a little English and he told me that it wasn't allowable to leave the airport but apparently he felt sorry for the women too. So we went with a couple of hours to kill.

When we got back from town I met our pilot. He told me that the next stop was Bermuda and that it was a lovely place and indicated that he would ground the plane there for a time. There was a young, good looking stewardess on board that he was making time with I found out. That annoyed me so when we got to Bermuda I booked a commercial flight to New York and back to San Francisco from New York. I never made Thule, Greenland because I had used up all the time I had in Morocco.

Another time Ed Ingal, another illustrator, and I signed up for a trip to Fairbanks, Alaska, to see the recovery of a rare aircraft of pre-World War II days that had run out of gas and had landed intact. It was wanted by the Air Force Museum. The pilot of that plane and his co-pilot had to walk out of the crash site. They were dropped food and survival gear from other aircraft because helicopters were not yet in use.

Anyway, I took off for Fairbanks, Alaska. I had never been to Alaska and it interested me to find permafrost conditions that existed there. Also midnight sun. My illustrator friend and I took off in a twin rotor helicopter. Ed was invited to sit in the co-pilot's place with the pilot. I was sitting with the crew chief in the middle of the "chopper." Couldn't see anything much and I can't even remember how long it took us to reach the crash site. However, when we got to the crash site we suddenly lost power. The pilot tried to auto rotate the descent but we hit the ground and bounced up and went down the hill backwards, smashed both rotors to stumps and came to rest with the tail right at the edge of a cliff that dropped all of a thousand feet. The chopper landed slightly on its side.

The crew chief had been ordered by the pilots to cut the batteries, whatever that meant, so I was alone confronting the exit door. I had to kick it open to get out, and I did. The crew that had come out first filmed our crash. I'm told that there is a scene in it that shows me climbing out and jumping to the ground. I was not hurt, nor was Ed. The pilot had some small injury that wasn't much for the impact with which we hit the ground. The Lt. Colonel who had preceded us there ordered Ed and I to go back to the base and be medically checked out. We outranked him with Brigadier General's orders. We weren't hurt so we refused and I am glad that we were able to stay. The poor pilot had a lot of explaining to do. He had just done a stint in Vietnam and this was his first accident and a puzzle to him.

We stayed there for two days and watched the crew dismantle the crashed aircraft. They were able to take off the propeller which had no rust, which surprised me because of the dampness of the climate. There must be something about that I don't know about. The fabric wings were full of holes where moose had trod on them, but otherwise there was no obvious damage to the aircraft. They were talking about lifting the plane out with one of the helicopters, but since they only had one and four extra people, I guess they decided that it wasn't feasible. Ed and I went back to the base in Fairbanks and back to California.

I made a painting for the event and I guess it is in the Pentagon with all of the others. When I got home Fran told me that the Pentagon had phoned her to tell her that I was in a helicopter crash but was not injured. They didn't want Fran to read about it in the newspapers and be alarmed. My injuries? None except a torn jacket.

Riess: And it was through the Society of Illustrators that they got to you?

Galli: Yes that's how they got to me. But you could sign up for these things. I could have gone to Vietnam if I'd wanted to at that time.

Riess: Now, why would it be better to have an illustrator fly up to Fairbanks and do this image rather than a photographer?



Galli: Well, I think because you do an interpretive job. You put nuances in it that a photographer can't handle. He can't manipulate the scene that he's shooting. The artist has the privilege of being able to manipulate the nuances of that particular scene. You follow me?

Riess: I do. I want to hear you talk about it because it's an important distinction.

Galli: It is, yes.

Riess: The artist is able to put the kind of propaganda spin on something too, you might say.

Galli: Well, I suppose you can, if that's what your aim is.

Riess: I mean, I wondered if the Air Force gave you an idea of what the message was that they wanted?

Galli: Oh, no. They allowed you to go and interpret it yourself, yes, exactly that.

Riess: You got to travel a lot, didn't you, I mean aside from these jobs for the Air Force?

Galli: Well, with the Air Force I made those two trips and that was all I was capable of doing because I was just so darn busy. But I traveled. I had to go to Europe a lot. People could buy second rights in Germany, in England, and places like that. You'd sell the illustrations again.

Riess: So that meant you had money in the banks in these places? Why did you have to go?

Galli: That's a good question. I didn't have to go but I decided I wanted to. Well, yes, I did have to go because I had one client in Germany that wanted me to do something. They called me for a cigarette advertisement. They wanted to see me, and they were in Dusseldorf, so I had to go to Dusseldorf. I said, "Why not go to Denmark?" because I have a second illustration right there and so I'll get to see Denmark. I went to the Tivoli Gardens and had a wonderful time. And gee, the Danes were marvelous.

Riess: I understand how Magnum Photos works for photographers, and I am wondering whether for commercial illustrators there were agencies that would handle your work and would handle rights and would handle billing.

### **Famous Artists School**

Galli: Well, I had to do all my own billing. Matter of fact I got so that-- . The *Post* was simple. I didn't have to bill them at all. They'd just send me the money. They paid every week, so that was no problem. All the rest, I got so busy I didn't have time to do billing so I'd have the agency secretary do the billing for me.

Riess: Looking through the history of illustration, they mention the Famous Artists School.

Galli: I was involved with that. [See Appendix K]

Riess: I'd like to hear about that.

Galli: That thing started right after the war, I guess.

Riess: Sometime in the fifties.

Galli: Yes. Fred Ludekens was involved heavily in that. My name came up, I guess. I was an original stockholder. It [the stock] got to be worth an awful lot of money, but I didn't sell it, so I lost it all. It was a peculiar circumstance. Al Dorne and Fred Ludekens organized the school. Al Dorne was an illustrator and was a pretty swashbuckling guy in New York.

They made one big error. They had salesmen that were selling this thing, and they had a limit of twenty-five dollars initiation fee for students. Then the students would come, and then they'd drop out. That got them into trouble. Then Al Dorne got ill and died and Fred Ludekens took over, and the thing just slid down hill very rapidly.

Riess: Was it actually a school with a campus and a location?

Galli: It was a school and they had a building. It was a correspondence school. They had courses. I have all of the courses here and I can show them to you, by all these wonderful guys. They had to write these things and it was a wonderful course.

Riess: What were some of the names associated with it?

Galli: Norman Rockwell, Bob Fawcett, Fred Ludekens, Al Dorne, Austin Briggs and Al Parker. There was another guy, I just can't think of his name.

Riess: Was it very legitimate?

Galli: Oh absolutely, good God, it was done very, very well. The only problem was that they would lose students because of the initiation fee. They'd drop out because they wouldn't pay their bills.

It went along for a while, the stock went way up, it went up into the eighties. I should have sold it then, but I didn't because I'd gone to Italy, and I was over there when this all happened. Bomberger sold his. I lost about \$800,000 on that.

Riess: Amazing. Were you on staff at all?

Galli: No, I wasn't. I was being considered but never got on the staff. I was just a stockholder.

Riess: What would have been the incentive for someone like Norman Rockwell or Fred Ludekens to work with it?

Galli: Well, it was a prestigious thing, really, you know, to be a "famous artist." They advertised the Famous Artist School.

Riess: I remember they advertised on matchbooks.

Galli: Oh yes, absolutely! Good God, yes, and newspaper advertising, all kinds of stuff. Oh sure, it was everywhere.

Riess: And somebody from Podunk who decides they want to be a famous artist, and they pay their money, then are they going to get Norman Rockwell doing their tutorials?

Galli: No, it didn't work that way. They had a staff that did the correcting of the work. The artist involved would monitor the events as best they could because, gee whiz, they had a lot of students. But they got into financial difficulties.

Riess: And did they really teach people how to become illustrators?

Galli: Yes, they did. I hear about people that have taken that course that are illustrators now. I have all the lessons here, but I've never looked at them. Gee whiz, you'll have me looking for stuff all over the place. I think I know where they are.

Riess: What is Cooper Studio?

Galli: It was a studio in New York. It was the top art service in the nation. I went back to New York one time to--this was a prior thing before I went to ring doorbells--I went back because there was a friend who was working for Cooper, from San Francisco, and I went to see him. He was a wacky guy. He decided he wanted to take me up to meet Norman Rockwell and he wanted to drive me up the Hudson River Parkway. I said, "I don't have time." But he insisted, and we had to stop and see somebody else of his friends.

I was panicky, because a friend of mine that had worked at Patterson and Hall and had gone to New York, I was doing some work for him. He was in a bind and I had told him I'd come back and do this. But here I was with this guy--he wanted to show me his new car. My God, he took me all the way up the Hudson River Parkway, and we went to see another fellow, Ted Little, that I didn't want to see and didn't know. So I left the party and went down to the phone and phoned Gib Darling that I was going to be late, and would he excuse me, and I left my wallet in the phone booth! It was a disaster, and you mentioned Cooper Studio. I had to go to work for Cooper for a couple of days to earn some money to get back to San Francisco. So I did that.

Riess: So you never got to meet Norman Rockwell, up in Massachusetts, I guess.

Galli: No, I didn't. He was up in Connecticut somewhere.

Riess: Gib Darling was an illustrator?

Galli: He was an illustrator, yes. Gilbert Darling.

Riess: And Ted Little?

Galli: He became the head of an agency, Campbell-Ewald. I got to know him very well. They had a Chevrolet account. I had occasion to get Jim Hastings a job there. Ted and Fred Ludekens

were great friends, and so Ted called Fred up and said, "Listen, I'm looking for an art director. Do you have anybody in mind?" He said, "No, I don't." But Fred called me and I said, "Oh, Jim Hastings is just the right guy for that." So Ted Little called him and he hired him right away.

### The Galli House in Kentfield

Riess: Your house here in Kentfield, when did you buy it?

Galli: Immediately after the war we came back and rented an apartment in Oakland for about a month. But I wanted to be in Marin County, so I came over here and started looking. It was January and it was raining. I looked at some houses here and good God, they were terrible, the wiring outside--you know, this area was summer places. They were all shacks.

I was in the real estate office and was really dejected and the woman felt very sorry for me. She said, "I'm just writing up this house, and maybe Ham can take you down there. I don't have a key, but he can show you the house from the outside." We drove up in front of this house and I said, "I'll take it."

Fran wasn't with me! It was \$16,000 and I could afford it at the time. So I said, "I'll take it." They said, "Well, don't you want to look at it?" We went back--he had to get a key --and I looked at it and it was wonderful. I called Fran up and she started crying on the phone. She said, "You couldn't do that without me there!" I said, "Well, I did and I think you'll like it," and she did.

It was built in 1941, just before the war [designed by William Wurster]. The people who had it, he went off to war and his wife met somebody else and they got a divorce. The house was up for sale and I came along. This studio wasn't here then, and the car shelter wasn't there, but all the house was as it was. I had the studio built by a carpenter; I had one part built over on that side and I had the architect design it for me. He's the one that designed the car shelter, Warren Callister. He designed that wonderful church down in Belvedere and one in Mill Valley, too. I haven't seen him since then. He came here and borrowed some money from me but that's the last I saw him. He was involved with another architect and I got to know them because they were in the same building with Patterson and Hall.

Riess: Was the other one Jack Hilmer?

Galli: Jack Hilmer, yes. I got to know them because my studio was right next to them. I was on the top floor, isolated. I had to go up on a staircase and they had the whole top floor. I had a little room right off that. I used to see them all the time. So when it came to designing a car shelter I got Warren Calister and he did it. And he designed the studio for me, too, but he made it for a low ceiling because I was sitting down [at the slant board] all the time. When I started painting I needed a higher ceiling, so I built this and incorporated his design.

Riess: Living here in Kentfield did you find yourself in the company of artists?



Galli: Well, Dick Hirshleb and his wife--she was a painter. My wife belongs to Marin Society of Artists and I belong to Falkirk [Cultural Center] in San Rafael. It's a museum and a cultural center. It's a very lovely place. And I belong to the Napa Valley Museum.

### Specifics on *Post* Assignments

Riess: Now, to how it worked when you got your assignments. You've told me that the *Saturday Evening Post* would send you stories and I'd like to know how that kind of transaction would take place. Would they call you first?

Galli: Yes they would. They'd call and say, "Look, we have a story here. Can you do it?" I'd say, "Of course, with enough time to do it." That's all. It was one person, Frank Kilker, that I dealt with.

Riess: Did they send their own suggestions for what part of the story to illustrate?

Galli: Yes they did and I always ignored them. They took my suggestions because, as I say, I was a visual problem solver. I would send them a rough sketch of what I wanted to do, several sketches. I'd analyze the story and figure out, because the function of an illustration is to stop somebody in their looking through the magazine, and get them interested. So the illustration has to do something like that.

Riess: Would there be more than one illustration?

Galli: It would be one illustration for a story, but then I'd get a serial, which would be multiple, starting in the first pages of the *Post* with an illustration for the serial and then some subsequent ones. And that was a big assignment. You had to plot that whole thing out, had to go through that whole story and segment it and illustrate all those parts that they're going to run, each part.

Riess: But they would tell you what they thought would be a good idea.

Galli: Yes, absolutely. They had a committee and they were absolutely stupid.

Riess: Would they get any input from their authors about what the authors would like?

Galli: Oh, the authors were terrible about that. Yes they'd get input, and my God they were off completely. They were farther off than the committee.

Riess: As you were working on it would you call back to New York and talk it through?

Galli: No, I would just make the roughs. If I had a question I would call, if there was something in the story that I didn't understand. That was very rare.

Riess: I remember the "Tugboat Annie" stories and "Hornblower" stories in the *Post*. Did you do any of them?

Galli: I didn't do any of those—well, towards the end I did a “Hornblower” story when the person that did the “Hornblower” series died, I guess. Then I did one or two stories, that's all.

Riess: Do you remember particular authors that you were assigned?

Galli: I did Eugene Burdick's *The Ugly American*.

Riess: That was initially in the *Post*? What did you illustrate?

Galli: The first part was the “ugly American,” the ambassador, sitting in his office in Saigon, looking out on the street. And you made it very obvious that it [the location] was oriental. He's reading a newspaper that has this cartoon of him on it, you know, as the ugly American. I had to get a model for that and he had to be pretty stout.

Well, I was living out in Inverness—we had a summerhouse out in Inverness at the time. Virginia Merrill was a friend of mine, and I asked her if she knew somebody that could act [pose] as an ambassador that was pretty roly poly. She said, “Oh yes, the perfect one.” She had a neighbor, and God he was the perfect one! Herb Caen wrote about him and poked fun at him because he was the clown of Montgomery Street. I can't remember his name.

Riess: Did you pose him or did you just take a photograph of him?

Galli: I took a photograph of him, but then I fiddled around with it and accentuated the un-positive. Maybe I could dig out the tear sheets on that—gee whiz, I've got a lot of work cut out for me.

Riess: And *McCall's*?

Galli: They were all women's stories, of course. That was fun for me to work on. I enjoyed that a lot.

Riess: How was the relationship handled with them?

Galli: The same way. The editor would call me up. She's the one who got me to do it. She had worked for *Today's Woman* at one time and I had done some stories for her and she figured me as a problem solver.

Riess: *Saturday Evening Post* had the greatest prestige, really.

Galli: Well, I suppose, yes. I considered them all important, every one.

Riess: How would a person get to do a *Post* cover?

Galli: God, I don't know. Ken Stuart was the head art director for the *Saturday Evening Post*, but I used to avoid him—I'd bypass his office and go right into Frank Kilker's office. It was Frank Kilker I worked for. Ken Stuart just struck me as being a difficult person. You know how you sense that.

Riess: What was it, do you think?



Galli: Well, I don't know. He went to work for the *Reader's Digest* after the *Post* folded, and he got me on the *Digest*.

Riess: By being out here you didn't have too much contact.

Galli: I didn't have too much contact at all, only with people I liked.

Riess: If you were working with the *Post*, did the art editors want to have someone exclusively, so that they wouldn't want you to work for *McCall's*?

Galli: You couldn't work for *Collier's*. That was the competition. That was a no-no. I didn't particularly want to either.

### Thoughts on Black and White and Color

Riess: *Reader's Digest* seems like such a different format. What sort of work was that?

Galli: I was doing illustration for them in the magazine itself and their condensed books. I did *Mutiny on the Bounty* and things like that.

Riess: What did you illustrate in *Mutiny on the Bounty*?

Galli: The lead illustration was the *Bounty*. You see the *Bounty* and the lifeboat coming toward you. It was pretty good illustration, really, actually, now that I think about it. I had to learn to draw ships when I was up in the Navy Yard.

Riess: And you worked for Random House also?

Galli: Oh yes, I worked for Random House. I did a book on Kit Carson. We had a fellow that I knew here that was a book salesman for Random House. He lived in Ross. His name was Jim Russell and he has since died. He got me to work for Random House. There was a gal in Random House named Bonino, that hired me to do this Kit Carson and I did the thing. Just black and white drawings. It was interesting to me. It's the only children's book I've ever done. I would have liked to pursue that but I never did.

Riess: Black and white drawing makes me think of Rockwell Kent.

Galli: That kind of thing, yes, but nowhere near like what he did, not his technique at all. He was amazing, really. He was one of my favorite illustrators.

Riess: Can you talk about how differently you would approach black and white from color?

Galli: Well, it's a question of values. You achieve dimension by the values. You know, juxtaposition of shapes and stuff of that kind. They have to--I don't know how to put it, really. That's a good question.

Riess: With both black and white and color, do you start by drawing?

Galli: Yes, and you develop the darks where you want them, and the grays, juxtaposition of shapes, to achieve what you want, to solve the problem. Now that you ask it, it's a good question, really. One I've never had to answer before.

Riess: It's interesting about newspapers going to color. I didn't think it was necessary. I thought you could imagine color in a photograph without being shown the color.

Galli: Yes, that's right. And the imagery in the black and white is very clear, isn't it? You don't have to struggle with color.

Riess: But "struggle?" What do you mean? People might say that color gives more information. Are you saying that color creates more confusion? Or am I making this all up?

Galli: Color has its place, that's for sure, but it's how you use it. The photographer can't manipulate that. The black and white is very clear. You don't have to struggle with the color. That is an interesting question, really.

Riess: Another thought, for you, doing your work here, you have the advantage of the famous light in California that artists refer to.

Galli: I never paid much attention to that. I had to make things realistic for advertising, and so you use the colors that, you know, would accentuate the story you are trying to tell. For instance, I worked for United Airlines and I made a California poster, and I made it all yellow! Then the head of the United Airlines called me up and said, "My God, the sky is yellow! It's blue!" I said, "That signifies warmth," and he accepted that.



## **Black and White Illustrations**

An early sketch, "Calaveras Hotel," Angel's Camp, March 10, 1936, ink, 11" x 8"

A drawing, "Tying Corn for Drying," 1980, 10" x 10". *"I did this in Pieve a Presciano but never made the painting."*

A drawing, "Going to Sunday Mass at the Mission," 1980, 15" x 15" ink and pencil drawing. *"The painting was sold to Douglas Manship of Baton Rouge, Louisiana."*

A drawing, "Tailing," Pieve a Presciano, 4" x 4", 1982

A drawing, "Much Hunted Bandit, Joaquin Murieta," 10" x 10". *"I had always known about Murieta and wanted to make a painting of the much hunted man. I did finish one small painting in about 1985."*

A drawing, "At the Tendon—that's the way it was with Tulare Elk." *"I can't remember when but I read an account of how they did this. I never made the painting."*





Camaras hotel  
Angul: Camp.  
3-10-36







as. lms

*Epiphyllum phyllanthoides*









Preve 32 4-11

~~Antonia~~







much hunted game  
Joaquin Murie  
5/9/11





Stirling W. Gould

at the Tandon - Thuto's the way it was with Tular elk.





### III VIEW FROM MIDPOINT: TYPICAL DAY, CHALLENGES, GALLERIES

[Interview 3: April 10, 2002]

#### Magazine Layout

Riess: Can we turn back again to the *Saturday Evening Post* and your magazine work, Stan? Did they keep their advertising away from the fiction in those days?

Galli: Yes they did, absolutely. That's another thing that the magazines are doing now that bothers me, they mix it all up.

Riess: And with *True* or with *Family Circle*?

Galli: I never really thought much about because it was always segmented. *True* magazine was true stories, things that actually happened. Their advertising was interspersed but never confusing. Usually the story that you had was very significant and it had prominence. You'd turn the page and there it was, on a double page spread. Anything that followed it, any color advertising was, I guess, at the back of the book.

Riess: Advertising could be more attractive than contents sometimes, maybe like your Weyerhaeuser work.

Galli: Oh no, that would be a mistake. *Reader's Digest*--we gave them a big six-page spread and they never got over it. They were after us all the time. And the Weyerhaeuser people sent me back to them to talk to them and they said, "Gee whiz, how come?" I said, "Your magazine is not our thing." I can't remember exactly what I said to them, but later I ended up working for them.

Riess: What do you mean? You mean Weyerhaeuser gave them six pages?

Galli: Six-page spread of advertising on Weyerhaeuser and they wanted it back because we decided that it didn't work. It was too small, just not very visible. I told them that and they said, "Well, it's all relative." I said, "It is to you but not to us."



Riess: What about scale? If you were illustrating a story for the *Post* and there were figures and some kind of action involved, would you think in a standard size of the figures, or could you sometimes have things that were quite miniature?

Galli: Yes, it would vary, but that was up to me to decide what it would be that would attract attention. Anything large is supposedly more attractive, but small can do the same thing. You have a sense of what is desired. You read the story and you pick out something in that story that is intriguing.

Riess: Over the years of your work, have page designers become more bold in terms of putting print over the story illustration?

Galli: They never tampered with the illustration. They actually did a very good job because they were more conservative then. Now I can see what you mean because I look at *Vogue* magazine, my God, it's just a maelstrom of pictures. Museums do the same thing. I get some advertising from museums and they have type all over the place. It's very illegible. Clarity is the thing that we were trained to adhere to.

Riess: You did work for Canadian Pacific, Stan?

Galli: Those jobs came a lot later, just one of the many.

I would get calls from everybody on earth to see if I had time. I had a minimum, and I had to reject an awful lot of stuff. But I had friends that if I thought they were able, they could do it, I would suggest that they call them. There was one guy back in Wyoming that I used to send wildlife stuff to because he could do it very well. They would oftentimes send it to him.

### Automobile Advertising Adventures

Riess: Were you tempted to hire people and open your own business?

Galli: Oh God, no. It was a do it yourself business. But every year was a heck of a lot of work, just all kinds of different work. I worked for Ford Motor Company; I worked for Chevrolet, my God, just all over the place.

Riess: What would you do for Chevrolet?

Galli: For Chevrolet--I got my friend Jim Hastings a job working for Campbell-Ewald that handled the Chevrolet account. Jim was a very bright guy. He's the one that called me right after the war started. He's the one who, I told you, whose father was the planner and estimator up in Bremerton. He called me to come up there and I left in two weeks.

After the war he started working for Cole and Weber in Seattle. Then Fred Ludekens told me that his friend Ted Little needed somebody, needed an art director for Chevrolet, and

I said, "Jim Hastings is the guy!" So he called Ted Little up, and Ted Little called Jim Hastings and hired him right off the bat, and he was wonderful. He developed an outside group as consultants and I was included, Fred Ludekens and I and a few others. We'd go back to Detroit in the new car year and see what it was like and give suggestions for advertising. We would formulate what would be an advertising campaign for Chevrolet. Each one of us would send in our suggestions and they would oftentimes take them or not.

Riess: But isn't this usually run by the ad agency itself?

Galli: Well, yes, yes. The ad agency was involved in this. They're the ones that ordered it. They wanted some input, and Jim Hastings decided that all these fellows that he knew had the knowledge to do this. So he needed suggestions because they gave him some opportunity to talk with his boss and his boss was a friend of Fred Ludekens, and all that kind of stuff. It was all intertwined. The ad agency would have to do all the hard work, the nitty gritty, and develop the copy for the idea, if they accepted your idea.

Riess: It seems to me that the idea is the hard work.

Galli: It is, yes. The copywriting is something too. Everybody's expert, you know. There are some brilliant people in the advertising industry.

Riess: When I think of automobile advertisements I think of cars photographed on a cliff near Mesa Verde or something like that. That's one look, a vehicle that can go over rugged terrain and is like an eagle. And then there are advertisements showing a car parked in front of the Mark Hopkins. Would you work with the company to decide what the image was going to be? Ruggedness? Speed?

Galli: Well, never speed. That's what they are doing now. Everything is just speed and it bothers me. I'm not very fond of what I'm seeing. There are things that we did--for instance, I had a group of college kids in front of a fraternity house admiring a Chevrolet. That was one thing. The look of the car was fashionable at one time. So that's one instance. Gosh, you're making me resurrect all kinds of old stuff in my mind.

Riess: Whether the image is family car or whether it's for single swinging people.

Galli: In meetings we'd talk about that. We'd have prior meetings. We'd go back to Detroit and sit and talk, then come back and out of that meeting construct what we decided we should do for these things that we talked about. Things go through phases. There are certain things that are popular at one time but fall out of popularity the next time.

Riess: They had to know who their audience was.

Galli: Absolutely. That was very, very important. We talked about that audience all the time. Chevrolet was an audience that was very particular, you know, a little less expensive automobile. It wasn't a Cadillac. You had to fashion your advertising to your audience.

Riess: Did you have any impact on the colors of the automobiles?

Galli: Oh no, not at all.

Riess: When you had to do the ad, when you had to paint your ad, what did they give you? Photographs of the cars so that you would get everything accurate?

Galli: You had to do that yourself. You had to go photograph the cars yourself and you had to stretch them a little to lengthen them and to accentuate what you thought should be accentuated. That was up to you, and that determined whether you would get another job or not. So that was just one of the accounts that I had that was very steady.

Riess: That's a good example of how deeply involved you would get that you went back to Detroit.

Would advertisers want you to do a different look if they were placing their ads in a different place? I mean, if you were doing the Chevrolet account?

Galli: Well, they would tell you where it was going to appear.

Riess: Might you tweak a particular ad for a different magazine?

Galli: That I can't answer because you did the ad and it would run where they thought it should run, and you had nothing to say about it. That was up to the agency and the client. You see, I was working for the agency, really, and the client finally. The end result was supposed to please him, you know.

Riess: Do you have any stories of unhappy clients, of adventures of the down side of all this?

Galli: My wife has one where I did a peanut butter ad for Skippy peanut butter. It was a baseball team and I made everybody left-handed. We had to change it all. That was early on when I was at Patterson and Hall. But that's the only time I've had any difficulties, really.

Riess: The work you did for Standard Oil, what branch of Standard Oil was it?

Galli: I did newspaper ads for them here, but that was a local client.

Riess: I have a list of various clients of yours--Hartford Insurance, Kaiser Aluminum, Squibb Pharmaceutical.

Galli: Yes, they fit in the picture, but you know, at a certain period. I would not stay with those people at all. I just did a few jobs.

Kaiser Aluminum I worked for pretty steadily. I had a good client at N. W. Ayer, or Young and Rubicam it was, I guess. He liked what I did so I did a lot of those ads. They were very complicated. They had very mechanical things. They had experiments with aluminum. You had to make this gadget with all this gear on it. My God, it was complicated as could be, to show their expertise.

Riess: Did you end up illustrating stockholder reports also?

Galli: Never. Early on at Patterson and Hall we'd get stockholder reports that I had to do bits and pieces of, just little drawings. Other people were working on the thing too. I got better work as time went on.

### Hooking the Viewer, Viewing Art

Riess: In illustration have you thought much about how quickly a person should understand what the image is about, and whether you want a certain mystery in the image so that they have to spend more time trying to figure it out?

Galli: No. My premise was always, first glance, first idea. They'd get an idea what's going on. Clarity was the thing that I worked for.

Riess: Is there also an issue of hooking the viewer so they're spending more time?

Galli: That's a good question. I guess there are ways of doing that, but I've never employed those. I notice an awful lot of complicated drawings around that are a scramble of all kinds of things, and I've never been party to that. My premise was always clarity and quick recognition of what's going on.

Riess: As a painter maybe you look at this differently now.

Galli: I have a different view of that now, oh, sure. You raise a very good point, and I've been thinking about it a lot, recently, making my pictures a little more complicated, but always clarity is an important point. I see what you mean. You're talking about making some mystery there that intrigues you?

Riess: I am. As you walk through a gallery do you want to sort of have a mental click, click, click, "I get it, I see it, I'm leaving," or do you want to be drawn into the corner where there's a picture you don't quite get that you have to work at?

Galli: Well that's a good point. I don't know how I would want to handle that. I'd want to be noticed, that's for sure, but in what way, I don't know how I would do that. I would have to study that, really. I'm working at stuff right now that I'd like to make a little more intriguing than anything else that I've done.

Riess: Do you think that viewers have become smarter? Have you thought about that?

Galli: I don't know how much smarter they are, but some of the work I see baffles me, to be honest with you. I looked at an announcement that came from a gallery—they send me all kinds of stuff—and this was such a hodgepodge, I couldn't make out anything. I didn't like it. It was poorly done. It was an announcement of a show by a certain person, and it was just a montage of a lot of different things. A lot of light bulbs and faces and just objects all around. Then a globe of the world with cotton that is placed on it, and very poorly done.



- Riess: I guess my question is about people's ability to handle more subject matter, perhaps because of television, handle more images faster, process information fast.
- Galli: I wondered about that too, because it seems to me that you have to be very quick to get what's going on. The computer has changed an awful lot in that respect, hasn't it?
- Riess: I think so. Do you at all yearn to be back in the business?
- Galli: Not a bit, not a bit, no. I enjoy what I'm doing now.

### The Artist's Day, the Studio, the Family

- Riess: Stan, would you describe a typical day in the beginning of the 60s when you were still cranking out all this work and the *Post* and other things were coming in? You were living at home?
- Galli: Yes. I was living at home, because when I left Patterson and Hall I started working at home. Three months in New York and then home. And in the studio all the time.
- Riess: When would you rise?
- Galli: I'd get up around 7:00 in the morning, as I do now. I'd sleep well at night. I had to because otherwise I just couldn't work--I'd carry these things in my mind and I had some sleepless nights. I had to get over that. That was very destructive, to carry over into the next day. I would come out here after breakfast and start working, and go into the house for lunch and come out here right away after eating, and work until dark.
- Riess: Dark was an issue because you wanted natural light?
- Galli: Yes, I wanted natural light. I couldn't work in artificial light because it altered the color and it just didn't work. So I'd put in a very full day, very full, believe me. It was jammed full.
- Riess: If you had two or three things that you were working on, how did you sort it out?
- Galli: I scheduled my work for what I thought I could handle. If I got into trouble I could always call the *Post* up and tell them I'd be a little bit late with their story. They were very, very flexible and so that was very, very good. Also, the other magazines that I worked for too, they all had flexibility: *McCall's*, that I finally worked for, *True*, and *Saturday Evening Post*, of course. And I worked for *Today's Woman*, too.
- Riess: Would you put one thing down and pick up another thing, or did you always feel you had to work each job to completion?
- Galli: I had a tendency to work and try to finish what I was doing. My nature wasn't one that could put things aside.

Riess: So at the end of the day, then, if the problem wasn't resolved?

Galli: I'd worry about it. But I'd have to put it aside and, you know, have family time, and put it aside and get some sleep. Then wake up the next morning and see if I could handle the problems that I had. That was the story of my life, a struggle.

Riess: And if you're right in the middle of your thing with marble floors or grapes in the vineyard or something and Fran says, "Lunch time," or "Dinner," or "We're going out," what do you do? You're caught in this great creative moment, what do you do?

Galli: You've learned how to obliterate it because you've got to do these things in order to keep things sailing along in an even path, I mean, your marriage and all that kind of stuff. Out of regard for Fran I would regard that call as an order.

Riess: Did you sometimes sneak out to the studio late at night because your mind was on something?

Galli: Yes, I would. That happened a lot here, too. When I was working on an illustration and I was having problems, I'd get out here and work on that. Witness all these things I have left over. [laughs]

Riess: Is it possible to work through a problem pretty well in your head so that if you have just enough time to think about it, you can come out here and just execute it?

Galli: It's not that simple. You have to sit down with a pencil and find your way to that ultimate, I mean, you can recognize when you've got it. You know damn well when you've got more work to do.

Riess: So it's a physical thing. You can't just do it in your head?

Galli: No, it isn't. It has to come out of your hand. It has to be transmitted from your mind to your hand and I don't know how that happens. It's a mystery to me, really.

Riess: What are these these birds flying up here [in the studio]?

Galli: Those are from way back when I was working for Weyerhaeuser. Ducks. I ran into a fellow that was carrying this duck, here in Kentfield. He had just mounted it, he had done it in some other place and he was carrying it home. I said, "My God, I'm looking for something like that. Would you sell it to me?" And he did.

Those models up there [horses and bears] were by a fellow that worked for the Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park. He died and his widow called me and said, "Would you like to have some of these things?" I said, "I sure would."

Riess: How did you get feedback for your work? Did you have friends around here? Did Fred Ludekens or Fran come look over your shoulder sometimes?

Galli: Oh yes, Fred Ludekens would come over here. And that was another thing, he was so neat. He comes to this place and it's so spotted with everything. [laughs] But I've seen messier



studios. My God, I just saw some photos the other day of Giacometti's studio. How you could find anything I wouldn't know.

Riess: Was there the feeling in the family of, "Don't bother Papa, he's working?"

Galli: I can't answer that. I don't think so. I guess Fran would keep the kids out of my hair, really. But I used to play with them out in the yard, too. I'd spend some time with them.

As a matter of fact, we took a lot of trips together. For instance, I had a boat, a small boat. We had a house out in Inverness, too. We sailed on the bay there. Then I took that boat up the Sacramento River, way up. I had Fran drive us up. She put us in the water and we floated down the Sacramento River to a certain point, and she picked us up. We camped out along the river for several days and ended up at a point where I called her up, and she came and got us. So, we had that. Then I would take them off on vacations, too.

Riess: Did you sketch them a lot, just free sketching so that you'd have material, when you would see them playing?

Galli: No, not a bit. I didn't ever do that.

My wife gets after me because I only made one picture of her, and it was when she had uterine cancer. She was in bed, and that was a terrible shock to me, really. We went to the doctor and he said, "You have uterine cancer." That was many, many years ago. I was on my way to Germany, but I cancelled that and stayed with her and she got over it. But I made a drawing of her, a portrait of her, when she was in bed. That's the only thing I did of her. She regrets that a great deal.

Riess: Why didn't you draw her more? You needed models.

Galli: She was a good model and she'd pose for me whenever I needed a hand or so, and things like that. But I just wasn't that type to do that.

Riess: I don't know what you mean by that type.

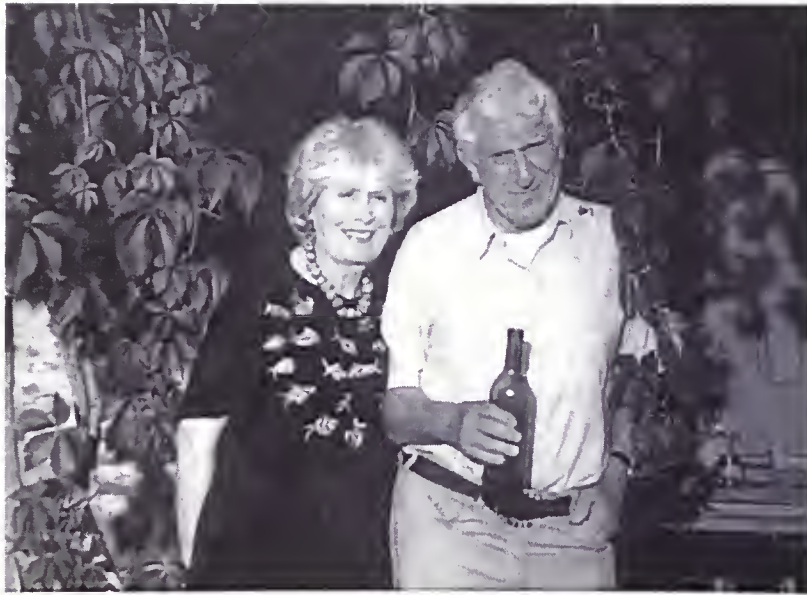
Galli: I don't either! You have to forgive me a little bit because my mind is not as agile as it should be.

Riess: No, no, it's nothing about your mind. It's that you are saying something that is interesting. I might interpret it as that you're saying that you were all work and no play, that your art was all work and no play.

Galli: Well, it was quite heavily on that side. Yes. I have to be very honest with you. I was just so damn busy all the time that it was on my mind a lot. I had other people's problems to solve and my own were on the side.

Riess: So it would be whatever, the busman's holiday, to be sitting around sketching your wife.

Galli: Yes, that's right.





Riess: How was your work affected by television? How did television change the expectations and uses of illustration?

Galli: I can't answer that entirely because I started painting many years ago and so I was out of the commercial work that I was doing. I didn't have a chance to think about that. As I think about it now, I can see an awful lot of changes in the advertising that's happened and I'm not sure I like it very much. I don't think it's very clear. It's a lot of jumble. It doesn't interest me at all anymore. It's just that I'm captive in the house because they turn the television on and I've got to watch the damn thing.

Riess: What about Xerox and copying systems? Did you use them in making your art?

Galli: Oh yes. The fax machine is something that could have cut an awful lot of time in sending my sketches back to the *Post*, that they'd have gotten them immediately. So that's changed everything, I'm sure. They're doing drawings on computers now, too, and I question the quality of them. I haven't seen anything that appeals to me an awful lot, really.

Riess: I guess sitting in front of a computer console is not what an artist does. You do what an artist does. You sit at the easel.

Galli: Yes. I draw an awful lot. You saw all the drawings. I have tons of drawings, my God, I just can't get over it! They surface all the time.

### **Influences, Ben Shahn**

Riess: Thinking of your encounters with art, I wonder who of contemporary artists influenced you?<sup>1</sup>

Galli: Well, Ben Shahn is a big influence on me. I saw an exhibit of his out in New York when he first had a one man show there. That was many years ago and I was quite impressed. Then I bought his biography, and I love it, he's a great intellect.

Riess: Would you go to the book for inspiration?

Galli: Yes, I think so. I look at it now and then to see what he would have done. He just stirs my mind, to probe my mind; it makes me make a leap forward. I can show you the book. It's incredible. I can't describe it entirely because it's a complicated book. It's filled with his work, his progress through the years. It's all in there, every bit of it. All of his work is in there. He impresses me a great deal.

Another person that impresses me is Wayne Thiebaud because he's such a gentleman. He came up to me at the last Mondavi party to talk to me. He said he liked my work. He made it a point to come over from where he was sitting at a far away table. I didn't even know where he was because it was a big party. He came over. He had another fellow with

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

him and I don't know who he was. That's the second time I've seen him at a party like that and he said the same thing.

I think he admires my discipline. That's what I think. I have no idea. I couldn't discuss it with him because I couldn't get up and talk with him, because it was a fleeting moment. He just came over. I thought that was very nice of him. I admired that of him. He's the first fine artist that would talk to an illustrator. The only thing that I can think of is that he admires my discipline, because I guess he's seen a lot of my drawings.

Riess: Do you have a library of the work of other artists?

Galli: Absolutely, I do. The house is full, and these cabinets are all full. I look them over once in awhile because I'm trying to make leaps forward. And you don't know where you're going, so you try to look for inspiration from some of these other men, yes. But, you know, not that I want to imitate them. I want to see how they handle things. Ben Shahn is a marvel at that.

Riess: Did you use these books when you were doing the illustration work?

Galli: I would look at illustrators, like Howard Pyle. I had Howard Pyle books here because he was the father of illustration, just an incredible guy. Illustration as it should be practiced.

Riess: Because you are an artist, an art book is like a dialog.

Galli: Exactly that. Gee whiz, that's well put.

Riess: But have you found yourself actually influenced?

Galli: I'd say yes, and partially yes. Mainly by Ben Shahn because he could tackle a lot of different subjects. He could draw like anything, the attitudes and everything. He nailed it right on the head. He was a giant for his time and I still consider him a giant. He has all the attributes that a modern artist has to have, I think.

### **The Stamp Work**

Riess: Let's talk about the stamps, your work for the postal service.

Galli: I can't remember when that started. I was still an illustrator, and Steven Dohanos was on the stamp advisory committee. He was a *Saturday Evening Post* cover artist.

But the first fellow on the stamp advisory board that hired me was a fellow named Norm Todhunter. He was an artist friend that lived in Mill Valley and worked in New York. He commissioned me. He came out from New York. And the first stamp I did was the Father Marquette stamp. That was the one he gave me. All the rest were from the stamp advisory committee from then on.

Riess: Some of them were series, weren't they?



Galli: Yes, a series of four stamps each. I think there were only one or two single stamps that I did. The others were all sets of four.

Riess: Now there's an example of working in small scale.

Galli: I had to make them five times larger. That's the size you had to finish them, and then they'd reduce them. But you had to design them very carefully so that they came off. Clarity was the essential thing.

I did those in between all the other work. I worked very hard at those. The first series I did was in Rome. I was in Rome at the time and the order came to me for the butterfly stamps. I went around to all the stamp stores and all the butterfly stamps--there were tons of them. They were all feeding on certain plants and I didn't want to do that. So I had to think like crazy. I made a number of studies and came up with the idea of making them look like specimens, with a shadow behind them. And that did it. That won a lot of prizes.

Riess: How did you know what butterflies to do?

Galli: They gave me the butterflies for each section of the country. They gave me the names of them.

Riess: And did they send you pictures of them?

Galli: Oh no. I had to go over to the Academy of Sciences and go through all their specimens and pick out the ones I wanted and study them, and make sketches of them.

Riess: So is that what makes it fun?

Galli: Just part of the work. You consider it fun too, sure.

Riess: Working for the Post Office, did they pay you well?

Galli: They didn't pay as well, but it was very prestigious and paid enough. And they got notices. A lot of stamp magazines would write about them and write about the artist and all that kind of stuff. I got a lot of publicity out of that.

Riess: Tell me about doing the Marquette stamp. What was the scene?

Galli: I had to do an awful lot of research. I had to do a lot of reading about where he went. Good God, that was a project that I did a lot of reading for. I got a lot of conflicting accounts. A lot of people would write that didn't know what they were writing about. I finally found out that he traveled in an Indian war canoe. I can't remember how many people there were that were paddling him, about five, I guess. So I constructed that. I guess I did a creditable job of that.

Riess: How did you test whether it was going to make sense when it was reduced?

Galli: Well, you had a mind's eye view of it all the time. I think your training allowed you to visualize it in miniature. But I would make small sketches, too, you know, the same size, innumerable ones, in color. Testing color, testing shapes, testing the image.

Riess: Do you sometimes work through a magnifying glass, then?

Galli: No. I had a reducing glass that would reduce things to a very small size. But I hardly ever used that. And I don't know where it's gone to, really. If I had to find it, I couldn't find it, I'm sure.

Riess: Do you use standard brushes, or have you devised some special brushes?

Galli: I use small brushes. I used to use tiny brushes for very fine work. The brushes I use are all there [on the drawing table]. You can see what I use.

Riess: Have you done anything for Ducks Unlimited?

Galli: No, never. I wanted to but it never worked out. I started to make some sketches for Ducks Unlimited because it was a thing I thought I should do. I just made some rough sketches and I've still got them around. I never pursued that. I just got too damn busy.

### **Challenges of Change**

Riess: I'm wondering, when someone commissioned you, was it on the basis of the last thing that they had seen that you did, and if that were the case, how would you ever be allowed to grow and change?

Galli: Well, that happened. That's a curious question. Curious because we just got rejected on some masks and my wife was very upset about it. I said, "Don't get upset about that, my God, that's just somebody not knowing that you can solve their problems." They wanted masks. It was from an outfit that we like a lot, one of those outfits that helps you grieve.

Riess: Hospice?

Galli: Hospice, yes. They had a mask project, so she submitted one of my works and she submitted one of hers, and they both came back. She was very upset. I don't know how to answer that question.

What you asked me was, I guess, the last person that called me, they had seen my work somewhere and I guess they figured I could solve their visual problems.

Riess: Right. And they don't want it to look too different from the work of yours that they know. But you might be interested in change.

Galli: I want to change but I want to solve their problem, too. Usually it conformed to the way I wanted to solve it. We thought alike in those days. The advertising business has changed a

great deal. It's gone helter-skelter and I'm not so sure I like it, really. It looks confusing to me.

Riess: One of the books about illustration that I looked at included a statement from Austin Briggs. You know this name?

Galli: Yes, indeed I do. He was a friend of mine.

Riess: Austin Briggs is quoted as saying, "All the illustrations in the *Illustrators Annual* could have been done by the same five or six people." Three hundred illustrations, and he says basically they all could have been done by the same five or six people. Then there's a quote, "Despite the present ferment in both illustration and the so called fine arts, there's hardly enough genius to go around."<sup>2</sup> What's your take on what he is saying?

Galli: He's right about that. That's a curious thing for him to say though. I guess he thought about it a lot. He was a very bright guy, really. I liked him a lot and he was a good friend. We were on this outside group together. He was awfully good. He was innovative. But what's the second thing he said?

Riess: The second thing he said is, "Despite the present ferment in both illustration and the so called fine arts, there's hardly enough genius to go around."

Galli: I don't know quite what he means by that.

Riess: What I extracted from that is the question of whether the illustrator embraces new ideas or fights them.

Galli: I think I would rather embrace them, but up to a point. They'd have to convince me that they're right and I'd have to study them a lot to arrive at that kind of view of things. I'm just thinking of abstractions. I bought some abstractions from an artist in Italy that I like a lot, but there are a lot of abstractions that I look around and see that I don't like at all. They don't seem to have any meaning. They are just a jumble of shapes and things that just have no particular meaning.

Riess: Briggs quotes Harold Rosenberg, the art critic, saying, "Must the artist weigh the advisability of a new move against the likelihood that the style with which he has identified will continue to arouse interest?" This is sort of what I was asking you before, how you know when it's time as an illustrator to change your style. It has nothing to do with solving the problem, maybe, but it has to do with recognizing that styles in art change. And whose judgement one ought to follow.

Galli: That's always a big question. Austin Briggs was an innovator--and I see that Bernie Fuchs here has a drawing that he made of Briggs. It's a change, but I like the looseness of it. That's the thing. I would balk at anything that confuses the content. It's what you are trying to say that's important and you home in on that, whatever it happens to be.

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<sup>2</sup> p. 252, *The Illustrator in America*.

Riess: Yes. That's a very clear statement. I think he's wrestling with the idea of illustration being dragged and pushed around by whatever is the avant-garde, and how to deal with that.

Galli: I don't know how to answer that, really. I don't feel like I'm in that category anymore.

Riess: He talks about being, "awash in a sea of Liquitex." What does that mean?

Galli: Liquitex is a casein paint that I use a lot on my paintings. It is water-soluble and it gets rid of the mess that is oil. But I like to paint in oil, too, with a pallet knife. It's a different sort of medium, really.

### **Ethics, Propaganda, Politics**

Riess: Did it come into play at any point that there were things you absolutely would not illustrate? Was there a moral code that you had to invoke?

Galli: There are pornographic things that I would never do.

Riess: And the people for whom you were working, was there a question about their values?

Galli: Oh, no. Gee, never, at all. Illustrating had to appeal to a general population so you just couldn't be raucous about it.

Riess: But advertising is propaganda often.

Galli: Yes. Weyerhaeuser is an example. We talked about Fred Weyerhaeuser calling me and we talked about it and I believed him, so I enlisted my services part-time. But I never had anything else like that come up. That was the only time.

Riess: And to the extent that you worked for the government it was just the Postal Service.

Galli: Just the Postal Service and good God, how honest could you be! They are very straightforward.

You pose an interesting question, though. I wonder what would come up--well, I just can't think of anything.

Riess: I think maybe you lived and worked in more honest times. The *Saturday Evening Post* is the essence of, whatever--.

Galli: Conservatism.

Riess: Conservatism, that's right. What are your politics?

Galli: Independent. For instance, for president I voted for the guy who was the odd man out, not Gore nor Bush. I didn't vote for either of them. I voted for Nader. How independent can you be! It was a protest against what I thought were two clowns.

Riess: Have you used your skills in support of your political interests?

Galli: I can't say that I have, really. I don't know what form it would take.

Riess: Have you been asked to do things free, you know, an illustration for a group where you felt happy to do something for them because they were so correct?

Galli: No. I belong to the American Civil Liberties Union. I just sent some money to the American Civil Liberties Union because they were complaining about the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> and all the changes that are taking place in the government. That bothers me too.

### Galleries

Riess: You have had your work appear in galleries, like the Baseball Hall of Fame? And the Air Force Academy?

Galli: Those were assignments. Baseball Hall of Fame, they had selected a cover I did for *True* magazine. I had made a cover of Yogi Berra. I went out to Yankee Stadium and did a cover showing somebody hitting a home run and Yogi Berra looking up at the sky. They used that in the Baseball Hall of Fame. So that was all. It was just happenstance.

Riess: Did they ask for the original?

Galli: Yes, the magazine gave it to them.

Riess: And your work is hanging at Weyerhaeuser too?

Galli: They have all my work, all except one. They sent one down here for an exhibit and Fran didn't want to let it go.

Riess: And you are in the collection of the Palm Springs Desert Museum?

Galli: They have two of my paintings in the collection. One is of a big horn sheep and one is an early California painting.

Riess: Have you done any mural work?

Galli: Not a bit. Well, I made some murals in the Abenheim residence in Woodside. We painted all the walls, Peter and I. He liked to paint, so we did a mural on four walls, in the bedroom. I can't remember the subject.

Riess: Do you think it's still there?



Galli: I have no idea. They must have sold that. It was just a summer place, a wonderful place on a stream in a remote part of Woodside.

Riess: Have you done anything like that in your own house?

Galli: I painted the ceiling in the bathroom here with animals and stuff on top of the ceiling, with crayon, with wax crayons. I go in there, but I haven't looked up at the ceiling. Now that I think about it I'll look at it, to see if it's faded.

### **The Painted West Gallery**

Shortly after our show at the Palm Springs Desert Museum Fred Ludekens and I decided that we should open a gallery to show our work. Nancy Burroughs was able and willing to represent us for the few days a week she had free from her other commitments. The idea was that it would be open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

We found a location in the middle of San Francisco's prime gallery section at 503 Sutter Street. It was one building from the corner of Powell and Sutter Streets, on the north side. We rented a space on the eighth floor, Suite 810 to be exact.

Fred Ludekens wasn't well, and so I did all the work of preparing the space of two large rooms that had very adequate light from windows on the outer walls. One room had to be an office, where Nancy would have a desk and files, plus racks to hold paintings, and space to show. The other room would have a sofa and stuffed chairs and would serve as a showing room also.

Since Fred wasn't able to do any of the work, I took on the purchasing of furniture and desk and files for Nancy. And I designed and constructed a movable rack for paintings. I must say that the place was elegant when finished, and we kept it for a little over a year, but it became apparent that it was more difficult than expected. Despite some advertising that I did, the only traffic and sales were to some friends, and that never was enough to carry on. Thus ended an experiment. I brought home the furniture and I used all the stuff for a showroom of my own that adjoined my studio. It worked well—I sold a number of paintings from that space.

My son Tom now rents that space for his licensed landscape work. We are glad to have him around. It helps keep the place in fair condition and allows Fran some painting time at her studio in Sausalito.

#### IV VIEW FROM ITALY: NEW IDENTIFICATION, ARTISTIC CHOICES

##### Rome, and a House in Tuscany

Riess: Let's pick up on Italy. When and why? <sup>1</sup>

Galli: Well, I went back to Rome and I started painting. I decided I didn't want to illustrate anymore. It was 1968, '69. The *Post* folded up, so I decided since there was no more work from the *Post*, and that was the most prestigious magazine that I devoted my time to, that that was a period that was over with. I recognized it right away. So I decided I wanted to paint.

I had earned enough money to be able to do that. Then I lost it. I had invested in the Famous Artist Schools and had made a bunch of money at that, but then it got into trouble. While I was in Europe it folded and so I lost it all. I bought that house [in Arezzo] while I was over there. It was after that I found out that I'd lost all my money. But I kept the house and then I earned some more money.

I decided to take a year off, and it turned out to be two years, we liked it so much. We had somebody staying in the house here and we went over there and we stayed for two years and I loved it, very much so. I was in a studio with a group of other artists. It was next to the Regina Coeli prison. I parked my car there and it was taken care of by the guard that was always up on the wall. I talked to the guards, all of them, and they took care that nobody touched my car. I had a Volkswagen van, a camper.

Riess: How did you get that set up?

Galli: We first stopped in Florence, because I thought that that's where I wanted to be. We found an apartment on the Piazza de la Signoria, right next to the museum, but as I found out, the night life was not--the town would fall dead at night. So we went on to Rome, which was a very lively place. Nightlife goes on there forever.

I looked for an apartment in Rome and all they showed me was apartments Americans would like, in a terrible district. You might just well be in Cleveland, Ohio! But I had

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendices for Galli's accounts of travels, including Italy.

contact with a gallery there, and so I went up to see the gallery owner and I said, "I'm having an awful time finding a place." They had an apartment down in Trastevere! They owned it and it was well furnished. It was tiny, of course, but it overlooked the Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere. So we took it for a year and then I found a place up near the Piazza Navona. So we stayed there another year. I just loved Rome.

Riess: Why did you need the nightlife?

Galli: I just liked something happening around at night, you know, not bare streets, some movement. And my God, we certainly had that in Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere. There was all kinds of noise going on down in the street. We lived up on--it was a third floor walkup, top floor, had a balcony that looked over Santa Maria in Trastevere. And there was a restaurant downstairs so it was noisy and there was life.

I found a studio. I looked in the *Daily American*, found out there was a studio for rent not many blocks away, and I went up there and rented it. There were five studios there--Paul Suttman and Elise Suttman, and Gil Franklin. He had a studio next to me. The studio I had was rented by a writer named Bigelo. He didn't paint, so the painting part of the studio was for me, I sublet it from him. And we had a Greek artist, Zoe Apostilides, in another studio.

Paul Suttman died but his wife, I see her all the time. She was at the Christmas party at my ninetieth birthday party. She married an actor from Hollywood and he does voiceovers, Robert Brown. Her name is Brown now. Her husband died. I got my house in Arezzo through them. They needed my Volkswagen camper to transport some heavy stuff because they had just bought a house up in the country. I wanted to see it so I drove them up there and I bought my house that afternoon! They told me about this house for \$5,600 and so I bought it.

It was a farmhouse that was being used by the farmer for storage. He had chickens in there and rabbits and all kinds of stuff. One floor was caved in upstairs I had to repair that, but that's the only thing I had to do to it. It had a courtyard, which is unusual in that part of Italy. It was a wonderful place and we had it for twenty-six years.

Riess: And running water and all that?

Galli: No, it had no running water. I had to put that in and I had to do that kind of work. The final figure that I figured was \$30,000 I spent on that thing, getting it all fixed up. I put new floors in that place that was caved in where my studio was. I'll show you pictures of it.

### Rediscovering Early California

Riess: All settled into the studio in Arezzo, with all this freedom, how did you know what to paint?

Galli: Oh God, I had all kinds of ideas. The freedom was just magnificent. [laughs] I thoroughly enjoyed it. What I was doing was I would make studies for paintings that I wanted to do. Early California was on my mind.





"Stellar Jay Study," from exhibition brochure, Foremost-McKesson, Inc., 1974, 52" x 60"



Stanley Galli working on "Mission Vineyard" drawing for transfer to canvas," Pieve a Presciano, 1979



"Mission Grapes," from exhibition brochure, 1981, 48" x 52"







“Raccoon Trio,” acrylic on canvas, 1972, 52” x 60”



“They Met Kearny at San Pasqual,” charcoal on gesso, 1975, 36” x 36”



I had gotten hooked by reading Joe Mora. He was a wonderful artist from Carmel. He was a cowhand. He did a history of the early Californians, as he knew it, because he was an early Californian himself. He died many years ago but he left a wonderful legacy. I was fascinated because I was born here and I'd see names like Palo Alto, and they had no meaning for me until I finally clued in that they were Spanish, that we'd had a Spanish history here. So I got fascinated with that history and he's the one I started with. That's exactly the way I started, constructing pictures out of what I was reading about what they did. They had the vaquero here and it was quite a thing. California was a wonderful place at that time. Life was wonderful, really.

Riess: I'm surprised that your California paintings were done in Italy! Did you have anyone pose for any of that?

Galli: I would pose for myself in the mirror, you know, if I needed a hand or something. If I didn't know what was taking place with a sleeve or something like that, I would look in the mirror and just make a sketch.

Riess: So you were reading what the scene might be and then you were illustrating it, in a way.

Galli: Yes, I was trying to make a decent painting. And that was another problem.

Riess: So what would you say is the difference in the work, between the illustrating and the painting?

Galli: I don't know. You just have to look at the work and decide what the difference is.

Riess: In this catalog of work of yours and Fred Ludekens<sup>2</sup>, are there any here that you did when you were in Rome?

Galli: No, they were all done here.

### Looking through a Catalogue with the Artist

Galli: [looking at catalogue] I'd just read all these funny things that happened, you know. I just concocted that, "The Three Californians," the horse, the man and the steer. I dealt with ideas and they are not as abstract as I would like them to be. Now I'm getting so that I want to do something more abstract. Allan Littman owns that ["They Met Kearney at San Pasqual"]. I showed that in Palm Springs.

See here, that's animal stuff ["Raccoon Trio"]. I worked that out--God, I just ran into a whole bunch of studies I made for those animals.

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<sup>2</sup> *Two Californians*, Fred Ludekens and Stanley Galli, Palm Springs Desert Museum, 1978

That ["Trading Post Day"] is owned by Rick and Rosene Supple. They live down in Palm Springs. They bought that from the museum, the Palm Springs Desert Museum.

Riess: Here is one called "Reluctance."

Galli: Yes, well, I did some riding around here, and we had horses that were not exercised enough, they never wanted to go out, and so it was hard to get them to get saddled up, so I just took that idea and made a picture out of it.

Riess: When you started doing your paintings of western subjects, did you expect that eventually you would find a gallery?

Galli: Well, yes, I had been showing around and it was developing like anything else. People see what you do and they call you. But I had a very wealthy client, too. Doug Manship was a newspaper owner in Baton Rouge. He had a cousin here that he used to visit all the time, and so I got acquainted with him because I knew his cousin. He was intrigued with my paintings so he would come by and buy one. God, he's collected a huge bunch of them, really. So he kept me in good shape.

Riess: When you came back from Rome the first time, did you have an armload of finished work?

Galli: Not really. I didn't do much work in Rome. I had a studio, but I was experimenting and nothing was worth keeping, I didn't feel. So I didn't bring back anything.

Riess: I'm sure you must have somehow met the artist colony in Rome--how did you do that?

Galli: Well, there were four artists in this studio I was in and then they knew other artists, too, so I would meet their friends. Then I would go up to the American Academy. I used to be up there a lot so I'd meet all those people. I met Philip Guston there. He'd come over to our studio and we'd all go out to lunch together. He was a very interesting man.

Riess: What kind of work was he doing then?

Galli: He was doing Social Realism. But I think he was just changing at that time too, you know, he was doing some of that funny stuff.

Riess: When you sit around with other artists, what do you talk about?

Galli: Talk about art and all the other things that go on, you know. Just the current events and a little bit of art, yes. Just general conversation, really, just talk about ordinary things, you know, whatever's on your mind.

Riess: Being in a studio near three other artists must mean that you constantly get feedback.

Galli: You become very independent and you find out that they all are, and so you want to do your own thing. That's what keeps you moving. You're searching, trying to discover yourself, and you've got to unload all this other baggage you have with you, to get at what you think is the truth of you. And you do it just by doing.

Riess: What's an example of baggage?

Galli: As an illustrator you have a lot of habits and you've got to get rid of those, too. For me it's a matter of working more loosely. That's exactly what I'm working at now. I made two little paintings that you saw that are off in that direction, but I haven't arrived yet, and you damn well know when you do. I'm not sure I will know, either. I can see that, looking at those things I did over, I just don't know why I did them over.

Riess: How did it sort out what you worked on in Arezzo and what you worked on in Kentfield?

Galli: Well, when I got here I did the same thing I was doing over there. That's a good question. I don't know why, I was trying to find exactly the niche that I wanted to be in.

Riess: As you began to get collectors, did you get a sense of what collectors were interested in?

Galli: Not exactly. The fact that they liked my work was encouraging, but I knew I had to change, too. I kept working towards change, but change in my own terms, what I thought should be changed. Nothing radical at all, really, if you know what I mean. I really don't know if I'm explaining myself well.

Riess: Now, let's get back to your work, in this catalogue. It's interesting to think about the part that color plays in that. I have a Xerox reproduction of the catalogue and I like this also in black and white. How come it's as strong in black and white as it is in color?

Galli: We had to train ourselves to do that. We had to get down to elemental things. You want to communicate a certain aspect of this situation and so you just fooled around until you got it. It is pen and ink, pen and ink dots. I start with the black and white. All those studies I have are all black and whites. Then the color comes later.

[looking at "Amigos"] I make a drawing first because I have to get the drawing down. The horse's legs have to be designed so that they read well.

Riess: And "Raccoon Trio?" I know it is very subtle shades of green and brown.

Galli: Yes, but it started out as a black and white.

I have some things here [photographs] that will show you how I work. This is the way I started on this painting here. This is a very poor photograph. That I did in the vineyard in Italy. Then I traced it down on canvas. Then I applied the color. But then I would make color sketches, too, little miniature ones, to get the color I wanted.

Riess: Form comes first is what you're saying?

Galli: Oh absolutely, good God, yes. You want to communicate what you have in mind so you distill it down to the elements that will connect, make a communication. But, you know, you make mistakes along the way, too. Nothing comes out perfect.

Riess: This painting [looking at photograph] is called "Mission Grapes." When you actually did it in color it's like you lavished more attention on the grapes.



Galli: Yes, I did, I did. I was struggling to get the drawing right because that was essential. Then this monk, up until a certain time they wore brown, but it [the cassock] was gray at the outset, my research tells me that.

Riess: Ah, your research.

Galli: Joe Mora he related an awful lot of things about the life of those times. He saw the tail end of that period. He experienced it, and he was a cowboy himself. He told it beautifully, really. So that fascinated me. From then on I'd drive down the highway and I'd obliterate all the houses and see all these people riding around. I really got very hooked on it. It was a form of illustration, really. For instance, the monks would train these vaqueros to get on a horse, on a wild horse. They'd have nose holds and things like that. Those were all interesting to me so I would illustrate those things, make a picture out of them.

Riess: Yes, so you say it's still a form of illustration.

Galli: Yes, it is a form of illustration, sure, I can see that now. But how you make a painting out of an illustration, that's the other thing that has been intriguing me.

Riess: Now most of this work that we are looking at in this catalogue is in private collections, isn't it?

Galli: Oh yes, oh sure.

This one ["Wedding Procession"] was spawned by a wonderful article I read about a wedding that had a procession that escorted the bride and groom to their new home. But the thing that I think is lacking is that I didn't show another horse here. It's not the kind of procession that he described, it's a lot longer.

In Italy I would do these Spanish things, you know, from my head, from all this stuff I had been researching. Also I found a historian here who helped me a hell of a lot, Rudy Larios. But I read everything I could get. I have a whole bunch of these books and things and then I belong to the California Historical Society, which is a very good repository for all this stuff. But I can't get there now.

Riess: How did you use their collection?

Galli: I would pick out things that interested me, first of all, because a lot of these histories ramble on and I had to pick out the things that interested me. I was interested in what the life was like then and pictorially I had to fashion my own view of it. For instance, I made a picture of a boy and girl situation where a cowboy, a vaquero, is talking with a woman who is in a doorway. He's leaning up against the wall in a relaxed sort of way and there's no question about what he's got on his mind.

Riess: Where did you get the faces for the people and these processions?

Galli: I just drew them from my head. Everybody tells me they look like me!

Riess: Do you use your face?

Galli: Not that I know of, just automatically I guess. My non-retractable nose appears in a lot of these things. [laughs] No, I just draw these things, you know, out of my head.

Riess: And the poses?

Galli: Those are probably my strongest suit, I think. I work at attitudes, the gestures and attitudes. I don't get them right all the time but I do work at it.

Riess: Do you ask someone to strike a pose or an attitude and then you photograph it, and then you have it as data?

Galli: Sometimes I do but not that often. I don't have time to take photographs, but I have a Polaroid camera and once in awhile I'll get somebody to strike a pose for me and then go on from there, because they don't know how to act. I had to go to New York to get women to act because people around here, all the women were fashion models.

Riess: Let's look at more in this book. I want to talk about one that you are completely pleased with.

Galli: Well, I'm not pleased with any of them.

This one ["Adding a Few for the Day's Work"], I just wanted to--they talk about getting the horses in for the day's work, and I just thought I'd make a painting of that. I don't know who bought that.

Riess: Are you talking about this being the artist's lot, to be somewhat displeased with his work?

Galli: No, I don't think so. It's just that--like a writer, as I understand, he's never so pleased with what he's done. And so, I feel that, you know, you look at these things and My God, there's so much room for improvement.

A minister bought this painting ["The Mission Herd"] from the museum down there. I think he was an Episcopal minister. He liked it. That surprised me, really. Because he wasn't Catholic.

A woman up in Vacaville bought that one ["Overlooking San Juan Bautista"]. She has a ranch, and she just liked that painting so much.

I don't know who bought that. I think maybe Manship did. The Algemene Bank bought this ["Three Card Monte"]. And then they changed managers, and the manager called me up and said, "Listen, do you want to buy this back?" And I said, "No." But I called Manship up and he bought it

## Raccoons, and Other Wildlife Models

Galli: This one ["Raccoon Trio"] I made a number of sketches of this and it was in a show up at the Nut Tree. It's fairly loose. It's acrylic, and that's like using watercolor. You can do things by just dampening the canvas and just plopping the color down, and it just spreads out.

Gee, I look at these things and it amazes me, that I had all this fur this way. You know, I guess you get so many habits of working that if you need a texture of one kind or another you just fashion it at the moment.

Riess: Speaking of models, where did you get your model for the raccoon?

Galli: I trapped a raccoon. I had one of those Have a Heart traps. I put some bait in it and of course I got myself a raccoon. I put him in the studio and he got out one night, and boy he was the wildest thing. He went up the wall on the ledge and he was ferocious when I tried to get him. I had to lasso him and then put him back in the cage. Then I let him go after I'd finish with him.

Riess: So these three raccoons are really that one raccoon?

Galli: Yes, that one raccoon. I just studied the attitudes, and his shape and the way the tail is, and all that kind of stuff. You just deduce what you have to deduce and then you fashion a picture.

Riess: And you happened to have a lasso around anyway?

Galli: Well, no, I fashioned one, just a rope and put a knot in it and put a loop in it. Just twirled it around and you got it.

I would trap birds, too. I trapped some blue jays, and I got myself some quail, but I'd always let them go, of course. We had a lot of quail here until we had cats in the neighborhood. Then they disappeared. I made a trap out of chicken wire, small chicken wire. I made a frame for it and put a door on it. I had a string on it that I could let loose when they were in there. I caught squirrels, too. I was limited by what we have around here, and that happened to be just birds, raccoons and squirrels.

Riess: Did you ever have a horse of your own?

Galli: No, never. My friend Haines Hall, he had a place up on the hills here, a small plot of ranch, and he had three horses. One I used to ride because he never used to ride him very much. He tried to throw me, too. He would go on a ledge and then jump to one side and try to leave me in mid-air. I got wise to that so he never did.

Riess: Did you ride him for pleasure or just because you were studying him?

Galli: For pleasure. I had no thought about studying horses at the time. I was working for Haines Hall at the time, so I was doing a lot of different things.

Riess: When you had been out in Nevada, had you had a lot of contact with horses?

Galli: Well, some when I worked on the cow ranch. But horses didn't play a very big important part in my life at that time until I started working for the *Post*. They had a lot of westerns, of course, and so then I had to learn how to draw horses. I would look them over very carefully and study photographs and all kinds of things, and watch the motions of them. Then I got a wonderful [Eadweard] Muybridge study of horses in motion, animals in motion, and somebody stole it from me.

Riess: This catalogue is of a joint show with Fred Ludekens. Let's look at his work.

Galli: He could draw horses like anything, but he started having eye troubles, and the proportions here are not very good. But the content is wonderful. Very simple. I have high regard for him.

Riess: He works in profile mostly, doesn't he.

Galli: Well, I s'pose. I hadn't noticed that. That's an interesting observation, I hadn't really noticed that. But these--he started having problems about that time. The proportions of people are a little off.

### Exhibitions, Nancy Burroughs

Riess: How did your relationship with the Mondavis start?

Galli: I had a representative, a very lovely gal, Nancy Burroughs.<sup>3</sup> She saw my work in the show at the Nut Tree and she bought a print, a print of a quail. And I got friendly with her, and she worked for a big Swiss pharmaceutical company and traveled around a lot. And she said, "Listen, I'd like to represent you," and I said, "Okay." And she was up in the Napa Valley and she went and saw the Mondavis and got a show for me there. So that's how that started.

I got to know Margrit Mondavi very well from then on, really, and Robert. They started inviting us to their Christmas parties and it's developed into--you know, they have an awful lot of friends and so I can't claim that it's friends, but they are friendly. She's more the art side. She speaks about seven languages, you know. She's one of those Swiss ladies that really knows how to do it.

Riess: Did the Mondavis visit you when you lived in Italy?

Galli: No, they didn't visit, but Robert took a place there for a couple of weeks for his family and they called me and I had dinner with them. Then they delivered this sweatshirt to me that I had designed. That was just one evening.

Riess: Do you think California is like Italy in some ways? The Napa Valley?

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix H.



Galli: I don't see too many similarities. The wine country in Italy is pretty much the way it was, but of course the wines have changed. The technology has improved an awful lot so their wine is getting better as everything else is getting better. But the similarities, I don't know.

Riess: Nancy Burroughs. That must have been interesting to have someone who was sort of like an agent.

Galli: Well, yes. She had a little gallery up in Clarksburg and she'd come down here and pick out some of my work and show it. She sold quite a lot. So that started a relationship. I just saw her recently at my ninetieth birthday party

Riess: The first one-man show you had was at Foremost McKesson?

Galli: Yes, exactly. Then the Nut Tree.

Riess: And the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento.

Galli: Yes. I think Nancy contacted them at the Crocker, and they wanted to have a show. The curator was a fellow named Roger Clisby. He's not there any longer, but the thing that amazed me about him was he spoke Italian. He learned Italian at the school down near Carmel, he had to train for the army. Anyway, that was interesting, and that was through Nancy, and she got me a lot of shows, yes, at the Mondavi Winery and the Nut Tree.

Riess: I told you that I really enjoyed talking to Don Birrell at your opening [Galli & Galli, Solano Bank Gallery, April 18, 2002]

Galli: Oh yes, he's a wonderful guy.

Riess: I'm interested in how influential the Nut Tree "look" was. In fact, I'm interested in graphic design, how it fits in to your story.

Galli: It's art for a purpose. It takes an awful lot of skill. Graphic designers are awfully good. I've had to do some of that myself. I did it for my son who is a landscape architect, I had to design a logo for him.

When I was studying I had to learn how to do everything, really. I had to be a graphic designer, I had to be an illustrator, I had to be just everything, and I had to be an advertising man.

### **Stories: The Leonard Bernstein Look**

Riess: Now, Stan, you had some stories you wanted to read into the tape, today?



Galli: Yes.

Abroad I keep getting mistaken for Leonard Bernstein, the symphony conductor. I don't really know why that is. Perhaps it's my unruly hair or my non-retractable nose. Anyway, I've had some notable incidents along that line. Once I was having lunch alone in a restaurant in Arezzo and I kept getting goodies that I didn't order, and it finally stopped. As I was leaving, the owner of the place, standing by the entrance, said, 'I guess you wondered about all the extra food?' He said, 'I thought you were Leonard Bernstein.' I guess Leonard Bernstein had been there before. And then, more bizarre than that was an incident in Greece.

Doug Manship, the collector of my work, rented a house on the island of Syros for two weeks. He invited his sons and several friends, and we were included. One night it was suggested that we take a boat to Mykonos and young Manship knew of a bar where they feature Greek men dancers. We went and found a hotel that would accommodate us and in the evening we went off to the bar. Dancing was in progress. We made our way through the crowd and ordered drinks. I was just sipping my drink and the group of dancing men drew near. One young man stepped out of the group and extended his hand and said, 'I like your music.'" [laughter] "Then in the course of the evening he would look over at me and smile. As we were leaving he left the dancers he was standing with and rushed over to wish me goodbye. The rest of our party was amused by all of this. At the end of two weeks I decided to take a plane to Istanbul because it was very close. I wanted to go and Manship wanted to go, too. While I was waiting for a flight, a man came up to me and greeted me as Leonard Bernstein. I put him right right away and he shook his head in amusement and by the way, he was an American.

### Stories: Dimitri Schoch

Galli: Another amusing incident, this one in Rome. Dimitri Schoch, a Swiss man born into a Swiss banking family of impeccable taste was living in Naples where his father ran a bank. He kept reading Zane Gray books and he had a burning desire to be a cowboy. The odd thing about all this is this is that he looked so aristocratic.

Anyway, he made his way to California and got a job with Miller and Lux. They ran a big cow ranch in Southern California, which is a big cow ranch in Southern California. Somewhere along the line he married a Canadian girl, Marjorie, who was equal to task of taking care of this romantic man.

We got to know them after his cowboy days. The Shochs came to live in Sausalito and had gone into the decorating business. He had a shop on

Sutter Street in San Francisco and had antique furniture that we bought from him, French pieces that his father would locate for him in France. He soon got tired of that business because he said that his clients felt more expert than he. He sold the business and with the money, he and Marjorie went back up to Canada in the Okanagan Valley and bought a peach orchard.

A freeze came along the first winter they were there and wrecked their crops. They lost a lot of their money and had to work on a cannery on the lake. They bought a piece of property with the small amount of money they had. They bought a piece of property near the cannery that was open only in the peach season, so they were out there all alone. The nearest neighbor was eight miles away. He and Marjorie had to camp out while he started building a house. Of course he wanted a French manor house. He started with concrete walls and he worked out a system whereby you could do a piece at a time. It took him years to do this.

About the time he was fairly close to finishing the place, Haines and Betty Hall, his oldest friends here in Sausalito, suggested to us that we drive up to see the Schochs. We did and it was wonderful to see them in their lovely formal house in the primitive setting. Town was twenty-eight miles away by car. To shop they would have to cross this large lake in uncertain weather, and it was a tough life. They had to cross by boat. They had a little motor boat. Marjorie's brother kept at them, and he was a nice rugged man who had made ice highways over the frozen lakes to connect mining operations in the northern part of Canada. It was thought to be impossible but he did it.

Anyway, he suggested that he buy their house and allow them to live in it as long as they lasted. He urged them to travel with the money that he would provide. They finally accepted that notion and they did travel. They came to see us in Rome. (I won't go into their travels because they get complicated.) He first wanted to visit one of his sisters who lived in Brussels. He left his passport in Canada. The airline had to go back and pick it up for him in several days. Their travels always had bumbles.

Anyway, they arrived in Rome without notice. They had our address in the apartment we then had near Piazza Navona. They left their baggage in one of our neighbor's apartments. When we came home the neighbors greeted us, told us that the Schochs had arrived and went out to look for supper. We finally found them and they stayed with us for a time. I would walk to my studio that was near the Tiber on the Via della Montellate. I had found a quick way of getting there but had to take one long cobblestone street, the only one that had a sidewalk.

Well, one morning Dimitri wanted to come with me to see the studio. We got to the block I just mentioned. I walked faster then, and Dimitri was some paces behind me. Three men were across the street talking together. Directly across from them was a small Fiat parked up on the sidewalk with

the front end up against the building. The only sidewalk in blocks and this clown had to block the sidewalk with his car. I came to the car, scrabbled up on the fender and onto the hood that popped as I stepped off of it, and proceeded on. A moment later I heard the same popping noise. Dimitri had followed suit. The men across the street yelled something but didn't act. I chuckle to think of the elegant Dimitri doing this. To this day I laugh over it--elegant Dimitri with his long cigarette holder. That car didn't park there anymore after that.

### **Stories: Don Luigi, Pieve a Presciano**

Galli: Another incident. This is in Pieve a Presciano. A committee from town came up to my studio to ask me if I'd do a portrait of the local priest, who was retired after thirty-five years of service to the church in Pieve a Presciano. I said, "Of course." It had to be a surprise and I went along with that. They had a photograph of Don Luigi that I would have to work from, an ordinary photo in his everyday vestments. I wanted some ceremonial vestments and they agreed. They came back a couple days later with some appropriate vestments. They had to steal them from his closet and had to return them right away, so I had to make notes. I had one of the men put it on and took a photo. They returned the stuff unbeknownst to Don Luigi. I made the painting. It was about twenty-four by thirty inches and it was mounted on the outside of the wall of the church covered with bunting, so that it was deceptive.

All the ladies of the town prepared a lot of food and the men cleaned up the grounds and rigged up a spare room in the downstairs portion of the church that was intended to serve as a recreation room for the kids of the town from then on. It was all pretty festive. Fran and I were there, of course, and they announced a gift for Don Luigi. They unveiled my painting amidst a lot of clapping. Don Luigi looked at the painting and after a moment came rushing over to me and threw his arms around me in a hug, all in high emotion.

It was a peculiar moment for me because I'm not a churchgoer. My mother never made me go to church and she certainly didn't nor did my two sisters. Fran is a devout Catholic but the only time I see the inside of churches is at weddings of friends. I'm not an atheist and the wonders of the world make me believe that there is some special entity that must monitor nature's natural events.

The afternoon wore on and people congratulated me into discomfort. Some women remarked to me that they had not seen me in church. I failed to reply. This ended the affair of Don Luigi.

I was glad to do that for the town. They had been awfully nice to me, really. They are a wonderful bunch of people. So anyway, that's what I wrote here.

Riess: Did you speak Italian over there?

Galli: Yes, I spoke Italian, but I never learned it properly. I learned it from my grandmother. My parents both spoke English very well. That was the nature of things at that time. They came over here to this new country and they figured out they had to learn how to speak the language, and they did. When my grandmother used to come over to this country my mother would talk with her in Italian because she couldn't speak English. So then I learned a few words. But I had to really learn it in Italy. My God, there were so many words that I didn't know. My vocabulary, still to this day, is just very meager. But I got along very well.

Riess: When did you first meet Muriel Spark? How did people meet each other in Arezzo?

Galli: I met her at a party in Cacciano through a friend of ours.<sup>4</sup> That was many, many, many years ago. He was a former navy captain that had bought this house. His name was La Farge. He sold the house to a man named Feliccia who was an Alitalia person that spoke English. I met Muriel Spark at that house. I didn't see her right away, but shortly after that we got acquainted and I saw her a lot. Then I corresponded with her secretary a hell of a lot.

Riess: Why the secretary?

Galli: Because Muriel was busy writing her stuff, and I would go over there, of course, and see them both, but Muriel had to work on her novels. Penelope Jardine had this wonderful old church, abandoned church, and she bought it. So Muriel had a place in Rome and she invited Muriel up to stay there, too.

Riess: How would you say that social life was different there than it is here in Kentfield?

Galli: It's a lot different. For instance, the Alitalia people are used to seeing people, and they speak English, and they speak a lot of other languages, you know, French and German and everything else. So they like to have any foreigner there so they can practice their language.

### **Looking Over Stan's Shoulder, Illustrated**

Riess: Now what are these snapshots?<sup>5</sup>

Galli: This is me working in the studio, in Italy, and this is our house in Arezzo. This is the kitchen. This is the very back end, my studio right there. And this is the courtyard, which is very untypical.

Riess: How old is this place?

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>5</sup> See Illustrations.



Galli: Sixteenth century, I think. This is the view from upstairs looking out over the valley, and this is the garage.

Riess: Do you have nostalgia for all this?

Galli: Not a bit. I had my time there and I knew it and am glad to leave it to someone that appreciates it.

Riess: Do you feel your time there really expanded your horizons?

Galli: I don't know what to think about that, really. I haven't thought about it a great deal. It gave me an appreciation of the Italy that I didn't know.

When we weren't there, the man that I bought it from would take care of it. There is only a single road going up to the house, so anybody that came by had to see him. They had to pass his house.

Riess: [looking at watercolor of his father's market] Would you take me on a tour of this, Stan? This is the drawing I asked you to make for me of what your father's market looked like.

Galli: Yes, and here I am [lower right-hand corner] grabbing a banana. This is where they kept all the vegetables, so that you could pick out what you wanted. There was the cash register, and a scale. And things for being delivered were put here. The fish market, my father ran that, and then of course he was doing all this other stuff too. He had a big ice box that he kept fish in, and poultry.

Then up in back of the store he would keep chickens, live chickens, and go up there and kill the chickens and pluck them and prepare them for sale. And as I told you, one day he left the door open into the alley that separated us from the theater, and the janitor was cleaning out the theater and he had all the doors open and the chickens went inside the theater.

It was a Saturday afternoon and so I went to the matinee, and My God, here were all these chickens in there! And the owner of the theater was up in the projection room, and he couldn't come down because when he started the picture the chickens got frightened and started flopping around, you know, in front of the screen! They quieted down in a moment, but gee, it was a big laugh for us kids. I guess then the chickens got off the stage and just went around--this theater was half empty, Saturday afternoon matinee, just kids in there. Then he and my father talked about the chickens, and there was no more of that.

Riess: Did you watch the chickens having their heads chopped off?

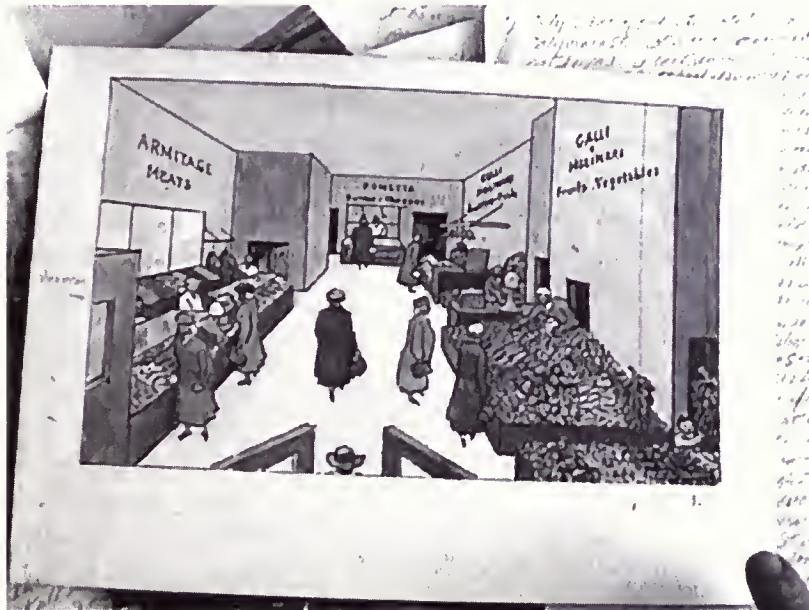
Galli: Yeah, I was there. Oftentimes.

Riess: Was it traumatic?

Galli: Not at all. Because it wasn't for my father, so it wasn't for me.



- Riess: [looking at illustration showing a sinking ship and a lifeboat] I guess you had to get everything about the ship absolutely right, all the details, otherwise someone would call you on it?
- Galli: Oh, yes, you'd get all kinds of poison pen letters. You'd get criticized for everything. Letters to the editor. They got them by the ream.
- Riess: Did you have war photography to work from?
- Galli: Yes, but in the case of that lifeboat, I had worked at the Navy Yard, I knew a lifeboat inside and out, I'd seen them every day. So that boat I didn't have any trouble with. And of course all of the people in there are just all out of my head.
- Riess: You said the reason you have these originals is because this is not the illustration that the magazine used. Do you recall how you changed it?
- Galli: I don't remember anything. I'd have to get the tear sheet out to see. I don't think it was any different than that. Really I don't.
- Riess: When you got to a point in an illustration where you were dissatisfied, couldn't you paint over it? Make changes on it?
- Galli: It would look--that technique needs to be--it would look worked over. But that's a good question. Fran is painting over her paintings all the time and they come out very well. But I was in a--at a time when you just didn't do that. In illustration, if it got fussed over the art director might say, "Well, gee whiz, you fumbled this."
- Riess: [moving to look at the back wall] Now these drawings on the wall?
- Galli: These are people who have been in the news. 'Kissinger. Fred Ludekens met Kissinger. He said he's the smartest man he ever met. I just did a picture of him. Jimmy Carter is there, too.
- Riess: And here, it says "Caffe Greco."
- Galli: Yes, we used to have coffee at Caffe Greco in Rome all the time. And so I just wanted to make some pictures. I was going into a print class here with those and I wanted to make a print of that. That was about two years ago that I was doing that.
- Riess: Who is this thumbing his nose?
- Galli: That I did in Rome [1970]. The wind is blowing, and he is thumbing his nose at the wind.
- Riess: What is this with the bull and the tail?
- Galli: That--I was so intrigued with the Thurber cartoon, where the two people are sitting bolt upright in bed and they say, "I could swear I heard a noise." And so that cow is saying, "I could swear I heard a shot!" And her tail's falling off.





Riess: And here you have your initials--

Galli: --on a pair of tennis shoes. I can't tell you why. I was thinking of Robinson Crusoe, you know, the footprints in the sand, and I thought, Gee whiz, I can leave my initials in the sand.

Riess: This Kosovo refugee?

Galli: That comes from the news. That upset me an awful lot, all this stuff.

And those faces are Clinton, and Mrs. Clinton. And Kissinger, putting his face into a briefcase--he's off on a mission.

Riess: Political cartooning was appealing to you.

Galli: Yes. These aren't very large ones. I just found them, to put up there for you.

### About the Ghost Figure Paintings

Riess: Several times in our conversations we have talked about your recent work with the ghost figures and the marble pavings. Tell me how that began.

Galli: Well as I say, that evolved. The first ones were solid figures and then the ghost figures evolved because I started thinking about it.

Riess: What was that clicked in your mind about the pavings?

Galli: I started looking down--no matter where you look, you look up and you see a lot of things that are unusual, you look down and you see things that are unusual. In those churches, I just looked at these pavings and I thought, "Oh my God." I thought about all the people that have passed over them because they were there for all these years, and that created a mental picture for me. I would see these people of the past trooping over these floors. Then they evolved into transparent figures. That was a natural evolution, as I thought about it. I was just fascinated.

I would take photographs of those floors from eye level and then transpose them looking straight down. You just want the information and then you can piece it together. There are circles, you get a compass and make the circle, and put all the things where they belong. You put it all together, you have it in front of you and you see it in perspective. You organize it in the way that--you know, a circle is a circle, but it's elliptical when you look at it from high level. But it's a circle never the less. The placement of all these things, you have a diagram, a photographic diagram of the way it actually is, so then you are looking straight down on it and you put it in its place where it belongs.

Riess: When you look at them, do you think about the people who laid those tiles or do you think more about the people that passed over them?

Galli: More about the people that passed over them, that's the thing that interested me. I've watched people laying tile, but they have to lay it according to somebody else's plan. It's the designer of it that would interest me. You're asking me something that I've never thought quite much about. Now that I think about it, I would be much more interested in the person that designed that because that takes a lot of imagination and a sense of design.

Riess: When you populate those paintings, how do you decide who the people are going to be? In one you have a modern man in a business suit with a balding head.

Galli: The bald-headed man was first. I picked an older man because he would be thinking about things like that. He'd be looking down at the floor and wondering about it. But then they evolved into people of the times that these things were laid. That was an evolution of a situation I decided I had to do.

Riess: And how did you clothe them?

Galli: I've got a lot of costume books here, costume books of those periods. I would design them, too, you know, pick out what I wanted out of a certain kind of hat, a certain kind of shoulders.

The background is a floor in the Baptistry that I made a drawing of, and I had it photocopied so I could experiment with color on top of it. I put some white paint on to tone it down, because it was in black and white and pretty strong. And I wanted this stuff to come through on the figures. I think this is tempera on there, and this whiting is an acrylic white that dries fast and doesn't dissolve when you put water on it.

Riess: But first you photographed it?

Galli: I went into the Baptistry, took a photograph, and then transposed it so it's looking straight down on it. So then I superimposed these figures. This is an evolution. I started doing completely solid figures on top of stuff like this, and it evolved, so then I said why not have all these ghost figures, that passed over all these floors for all these centuries? That was my reasoning, to show the transparency, that the floor shows through these people--it makes them sort of ghost figures.

Riess: Stan, I'm interested, how do you think that your wonderful ability to create the image you want, or tell the story, has changed in the last fifty years?

Galli: That's a hard thing for me to answer, I don't really know. My drawing ability has improved, of course, because by just doing it, you do by doing. You find out what you don't know and you correct what you don't know. You make some progress along those lines. It's inevitable.

But I'm changing now. I'm right in the midst of change. I'm simplifying. I get too damn much detail in these things and I find out that it's not necessary. These little sketches I do are all better than the finished work I do. I begin to see that very clearly as I look over all this stuff. Gee, it's all there, the attitudes and everything else. There's nothing I have to do to make it better. The esthetics of it concern me now.

Riess: Would the magazines have accepted the sketchier work if you had submitted it?



Work from 1989 and the 1990s. The first illustrations are of Stanley Galli working at the easel, and an ink and pencil study of the floor of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. Other paintings are of figures visualized against the complex tiled floors of churches in Florence, Verona, and Sienna.













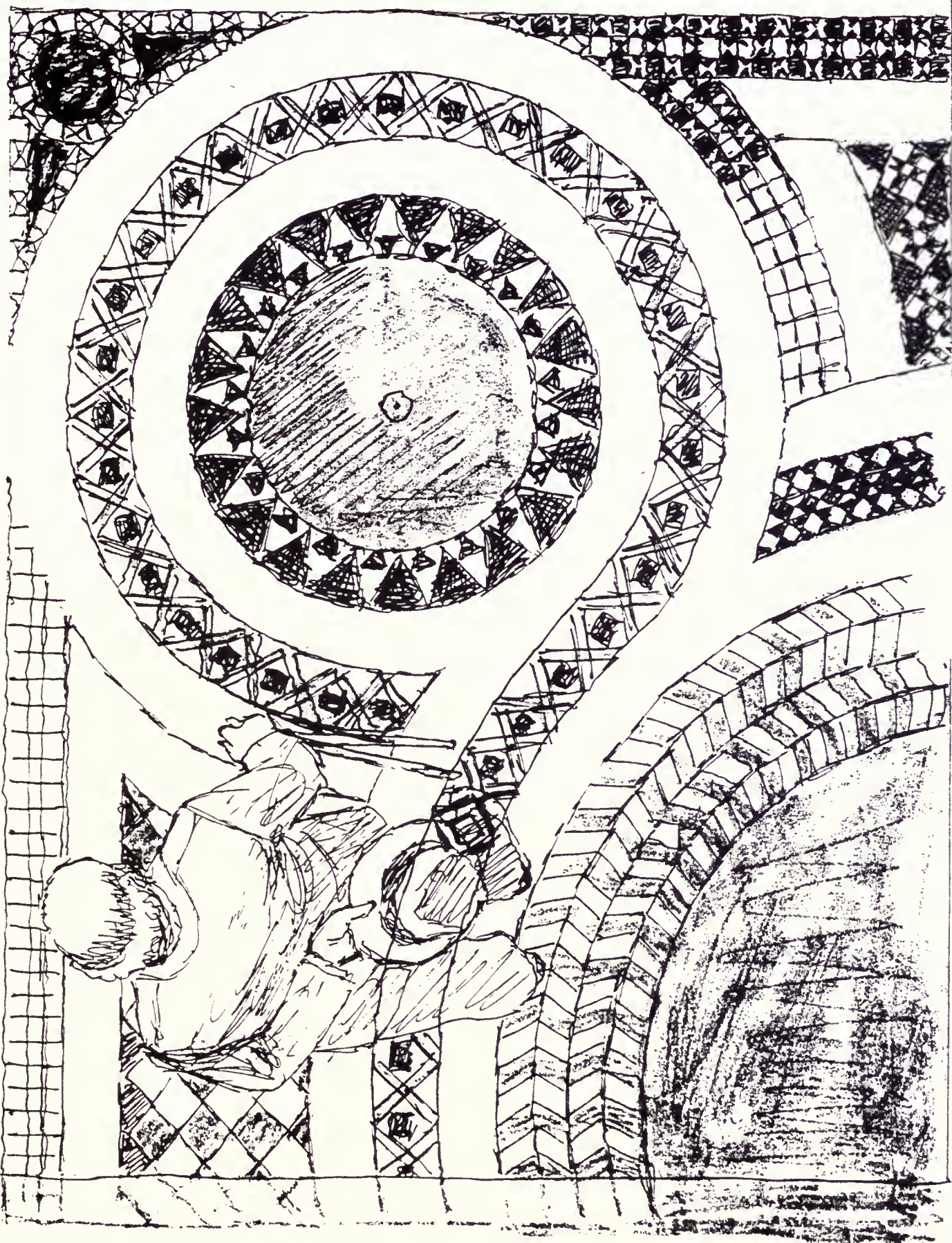
















- Galli: I don't think so. At the time they wanted it it had to be very finished. It's changed now. There's quite a change in things. I can see that they are sketchier.
- Riess: It is amazing what you can do in a few lines. Has your stroke affected your ability to continue to sketch and make the line?
- Galli: It doesn't seem to have bothered me at all, really. I'm just not walking well, that's all. That's the only thing that bothers me, really. I had a stroke on the right side and I'm left handed. That was a stroke of luck. [laughs] This hand, there's just a little tremor in it, that's all.



*This additional material is a continuation of Mr. Galli's hand-written accounts [see p. 4]*

## **Reno**

Then the Depression hit. My mother had re-married a man she had met while we were vacationing in Nevada City, California. This we did for three summers. In the third year of our stay in Nevada City, she divorced my father. The man she married was Peter Bona, a Piedmontese. His trade was as a shoemaker and repairer. Not too bright and quite ordinary. He soon found work at a lumberyard in Reno.

My mother borrowed some money and set up a grocery store. I went off to finish high school. They counted my credits wrong and so I graduated one year after starting, which made my high schooling three and a half years. Since my mother's "Bona Cash Grocery" was doing well, she talked me into applying for a job at one of the local bakeries. Since she would be a customer of theirs, they were amenable.

I started as a baker's apprentice. That didn't last long. I worked with the head cake baker. One day he ordered me to mix a batch of lemon filling for the pies he had to make. Not being knowledgeable about chemistry I chose a bowl for the making of the ingredients, which had a heavy proportion of lemon juice. The bowl was a copper bowl. When I was well along, the baker looked over and saw what I was doing and blew up. "My God," he said, "you will never make a baker." Lemon juice on copper produces copper sulfate! He put me at work frying doughnuts in a large iron vessel that had channels of hot grease and was fitted with a dough dispenser with a crank. Each crank would plop a formed doughnut into the hot grease and you had to move them all through all channels until you arrived at the end, all the while turning the doughnuts over so that they were cooked on both sides. This was done with a stick and in doing that the hot grease would invariably splash and burn me.

At the end of a few days of that I asked to leave. The owner wanted to keep me, so he put me on a bread-wrapping machine. That wasn't difficult but very boring. There was another bakery down the alley in back of this bakery. It was named the Reno Baking Co. and was run by another Italian named Siri. The first man I worked for was named Baldini and was a gentle fellow. Siri was more aggressive in nature, but very fair. At the time I applied for a job there, he had lost one of his drivers that supplied customers with his bakery products.

So I became a driver and had all the customers that the former driver had. They consisted of stores and private individual families. It all constituted a set route. I did that bakery thing for about a year and a half.

## Driving A Laundry Truck

President Roosevelt came into office at that time and created the NRA. That made an eight-hour day from a twelve to fourteen hour day that had existed prior. Well, that opened up a lot of jobs. My close grammar school friend Peter Abenheim knew that I wanted to get back to San Francisco. I corresponded with him all the while I was in Reno and I told him I wanted to get back to San Francisco. His father was a principal in the Galland Mercantile Laundry.

The eight hour week created room for more drivers to service restaurants, hotels, dentists, doctors, stores like my father's who needed what were called "dusters," a sort of canvas coat (tan), doctors' gowns, nurses' gowns, towels for dentists and hotels, and, yes, towels for prostitutes. We supplied linens for every kind of business. At that Depression time the government opened up abandoned business spaces and fitted them out with iron beds and washrooms. These were called "flop-houses." Guess what I got on my roster of work--all the discards of other drivers. I got three "flop-houses" in the Mission District, a number of prostitution houses, all the venereal disease doctors at 490 Post Street, and on Saturdays I got all the difficult hotels, one of which had to be picked up in the basement of the hotel and brought up to street level by a hand-cranked elevator. You had to bundle all the damp and heavy laundry in large canvas tie cloths and carry them to this infernal elevator and strain to get all the stuff up to the truck and load it.

I did this for a year and a half and saved every cent I could. The first place I lived in was the YMCA Hotel that was walking distance to work. Shortly after that my sister Irene married a Genoese man named Eugene Biggio. He was well off and they took an apartment on Polk and Chestnut streets. I moved in with them. I worked at the laundry for a year and a half. By that time I had saved enough money to pay my way to art school, the then California School of Fine Arts just over the hill from the apartment. So I enrolled and paid my way for a semester there. The date eludes me: 1936-37?

Just before I quit Galland Laundry, the violent longshoremen's strike occurred. There was some shooting on Russian Hill and a general strike was called. The city became a "ghost town." All business came to a standstill. Goon squads would cruise the streets looking for anybody breaking the "union rules." Nobody should be "delivering anything." I saw some terrible violence. One in particular, a man was delivering pies from his sedan at a Clinton Cafeteria in an alley off Market Street. The goon squad found him at it. They beat him up, kicked him and overturned his vehicle and left him lying there.

They eyed me but recognized that the Galland Laundry was an exception because we supplied stuff for hospitals and doctors. Nevertheless, I was forced to the curb on a couple of occasions and only because someone in the car that pulled me over recognized our lone status. Right after the strike I quit and went home to Reno, Nevada, for a rest and visit with my mother.

## Ranch Hand

I was downtown one day at the Bank Club, a gambling casino, watching a Faro game. An older man came up to me and said, "Do you wanna work?" I said "Yes." He added "Get your sleeping gear and meet me at the corner of Virginia and Fourth streets in two hours." I did. He was a former US Senator from Nevada, Cowles I think was his name.

I climbed in next to him and we started driving. Part way down the road I noticed that he would veer the car toward an oncoming California car and force them to move over. Also, he took a big pistol out of his pocket and laid it on the seat alongside of us. He muttered something about California drivers. If the passing car stopped, he would get out of the car with his pistol. That would dissuade any argument.

We went on to Lovelock where he had a cabin. There we met Rooney the cook for the ranch that the Senator owned with 3,000 head of cattle. It was on the edge of the Black Rock Desert north of Pyramid Lake. We stayed overnight in the cabin and I slept on the floor while Rooney and the Boss drank booze half the night. The next morning we departed for the ranch. There were roads to Pyramid Lake but after that we had to pick our way through the sagebrush. It was bumpy and slow but we finally came to the ranch site.

Everybody was out in the brush with guns. They were hunting for a rabid coyote and finally shot him. We all gathered at a water pump. I was thirsty and they pumped me a canister of water. It tasted strange to me and I remarked about it. They all had noticed a strange taste to the water. They ordered "Meat Axe" to climb down the well, which turned out to have caved in and drowned several rats! But first--they had me go to the kitchen where there was a pot of water on the stove that had been boiled and I slaked my thirst with the dipper that was in the pot. The work included wood for the winter and all the chores that go into the running of a spread.

"Meat Axe" turned out to be my roommate for the month I was there. His real name was Frank Kissler, completely illiterate. We were quartered in a shack with a caved-in roof. He would often have me tally his earnings. He got his name from a recent incident that occurred fairly recently when he drove a wild horse into the ranch corral to be "broken" later that evening. After supper he and the hands went to "break" the wild horse. They got a saddle on the horse but couldn't mount him. The jigger boss took over and got on the horse but the cinch loosened up and the saddle turned over and the jigger boss got stomped on some. Meanwhile, Kissler grabbed a "meat axe" that was used to kill a steer for meat, killed the wild horse and came over and was standing over the jigger boss who was just regaining consciousness. He exclaimed, "You hit me with that meat axe!" The name stuck!

I forgot to add that the incident at the corral crippled the jigger boss. He had the only intact room in the bunkhouse. He had to get on his horse from the bunkhouse to the kitchen where we would all eat our meals. It was about 25 feet from the bunkhouse.



## Art School To Office

I had three semesters in all at the California School of Fine Arts. Two were on scholarships I think. Anyway, at the end of the third semester Patterson and Sullivan, a large commercial art service, came to the school searching for talent they could use. They saw some of my work that was on exhibit and left word that they would like to talk to me. All of the students I told of this warned me not to accept a job at a commercial establishment. Most of the students were there because their families were able to send them there.

I knew that I had to earn a living. I was in Maurice Sterne's class at the time. Sterne had recommended me for a similar job that I pursued but that came to nothing. I was out of money and needed to earn something, so I went. I was hired right away at \$40 a month. Can you imagine that! In very short order I proved that I could do a lot of things. Patterson had the Safeway magazine as one of his clients. I made stacks of drawings caricaturing uses of food for that magazine. They sold them all, for what prices I never knew. Anyway, my abilities were drawing attention.

In my first year at Patterson and Sullivan, the firm went through some changes. Sullivan, who was a bombastic fellow, got into difficulties with Patterson and left. I never did know what the differences were about but the results were positive. A silent partner, Haines Hall, became the second partner. So it became Patterson and Hall. At the time at Pine and Battery Streets. After the breakup we moved to 425 Bush Street. Shortly after moving to Bush Street, Patterson and Hall bought the building.

By that time I had become close to Haines Hall who was awfully talented and a very likeable person in every way. There were two studios at the backside of the building, reached by a long hallway. Haines and another artist, Jack Painter, occupied a large space and next to it was a smaller space that they put me in with another young artist named Harry Gittelson. Gittelson soon left and was replaced by a wonderful Mexican artist, Amado Gonzalez.

Time passed and I kept getting better work. New people were being hired. One in particular should be mentioned, Bruce Bomberger. He was working at Lord & Thomas, an advertising agency. He was a great commercial artist. He and I became partners in the firm just as World War II broke out.

## War Years

I got a call from J. N. Hastings from Bremerton, Washington who was working at a new job in the US Navy Repair Station in Bremerton, Washington. He had been working at an ad agency of prominence in Honolulu. His father was Chief Planner and Estimator at the Navy Yard in Bremerton and called his son prior to December 7<sup>th</sup> and told him that trouble was brewing and that war was a possibility. Jim Hastings had a family started and his father was concerned and found a job for him at the Navy Yard.

I had a child on the way and Jim knew my feelings about the Army. I had been through dozens of gruesome films of World War I in which you were exposed to trench warfare, bayonetings and other revolting scenes. I didn't want any of that. I thought an entree into the Navy would be much better. I would be much better off on a ship that got blown up. I would have been more comfortable up until the last moment. Trench warfare had no appeal at all for me and I felt it was a good choice.

Two weeks after Pearl Harbor we were on our way north. I had just bought a Ford station wagon before the war started. It turned out to be a lucky purchase. When I got to Bremerton everybody wanted to buy it from me.

Anyway, I got to Bremerton and Jim Hastings had an apartment for me right next to his. His wife Beverly's father was the head of the Paint Shop in the Navy Yard and so in order to get a job I had to go to him. He was a very nice man and his wife was a gracious woman. I was put to work with Jim Hastings who was conducting an experimental training program. It consisted of making training manuals for new workers at the multitudes of trades that ship repair demands.

Now that I look back on it, it was darned important. We had to make drawings for manuals that made it easy for people that never worked with plans. The need for workers from all sorts of places was a great need. Most of the persons couldn't read normal blue prints. We had to devise perspective drawings in scale. A big task that we finally achieved.

Anyway, we went along and the staff grew larger. We had a space in one location after another and I kept at my work and expecting to go into the Navy. Our first son Tim was born in Bremerton August 19th. Diaper delivery on a bicycle began. I would carry diapers in a bag hanging from the handlebars on my way to work. Gas was rationed but I was able to see spots close by on Sundays. In the first weeks at the Navy Yard there were some alarms. The Japanese Navy was probing the area and we had some alerts. Jim and I decided that we needed to construct a bomb shelter for our families. The Jaixen's residence was only a block away and Mr. Jaixen allowed that we could build a shelter in his basement. Jim and I worked at mixing cement and put together a bomb shelter after some strenuous work of some weeks duration. We devised a crawl-in entrance that turned out to be too small for pregnant Fran. I guess we finally plugged it up and made another entry later.

Our boss was Lieutenant Commander Adams. A resolute man of good temper and knowledgeable. He was good to work for. We got called on to contribute drawings for the Yard newspaper and it was under the direction of a Lt. Davis, a New Yorker and a nice young guy, newly commissioned.

### **Weverhauser Work, And Into The 1950s**

All in all, it was an interesting life, never a dull moment. Word got around that we were advertising artists and word got around in Seattle. In the first month that I was in Bremerton, Patterson and Hall sent me some work to do for Southern Pacific Railroad. I did that in the evenings in the attic of our apartment. It had to be reached by a ladder that pulled down from the ceiling in the back hallway. It was a small space that I rigged up with lighting and did a lot of work up there.

N.W. Ayer in Seattle had me do some stuff for them. Cole & Weber had the Seattle Times account and I did stuff for them. They finally got the Weyerhaeuser account after the war and approached me with that.

I was cool on that offer because I had been reading about them in the newspapers of the time. They were the environmental villains of the times, having cut their way across the nation laying waste to the land. My reluctance was obvious and made known to the company. Fred Weyerhaeuser was in San Francisco on business and called me from the Clift Hotel. I went to see him.

He explained to me that they were well aware of their past and that they had adopted a plan of sustained yield after a system practiced in Germany for replenishing cut over land. They called it "Tree Farming." They needed public relations efforts to make themselves more welcome in Washington, DC, where they had to throw their hat in the door to gain entrance. He made it sound worthwhile and so I enlisted my services.

They had some initial suggestions that weren't very good. They wanted to dramatize the pictorial possibilities of men at the top tall trees. But they discarded that. What was settled on was more natural. The showing of wildlife in the forests with tree farming shown to its scientific advantage. That was the theme that was followed.

At the time I was busy as I could be and I needed someone else and that person was Fred Ludekens who was much better than I with this problem. So I got him interested. We took off on what became a well-known series of institutional advertising. Fred Ludekens became a partner in Foote Cone & Belding after a couple of years and I lost him.

I got Bruce Bomberger on the project. When I got Bruce we had just left Patterson and Hall and were freelancing. Bruce was not an outdoor man and time did show that. He did a creditable job, but it all came to an end by itself. I then got Jack Dumas who was really an outdoor man and avid fisherman. He worked out well.

### Italy--Leaving Commercial Art

The thing went from 1952 to 1968 when the *Saturday Evening Post* ended as a magazine. That was a signal for me to leave commercial art and I went to Rome in 1969 to 1971.<sup>1</sup> I took a studio in the Via Delle Mantellate next to the Prison Regina Coeli and an apartment in Trastevere that belonged to the Obelisco Gallery, a Rome gallery that I had known previously.

When I had come to Italy I stopped in Florence thinking that perhaps that was the place to settle. We found an apartment right on the Piazza della Signorina but nighttime Florence seemed dead to both of us, so we went on to Rome. I trudged around to real estate people and was always shown apartments in places that were what they thought Americans would like. In desperation I ended up in the Obelisco Gallery.



I told Cesare Bellici my plight and he understood perfectly. He said we have just what you are looking for. He closed the gallery and we got into his car and he drove me to the apartment in Trastevere. It was super. Up on the top floor, fitted out with elegant furniture, a small kitchen and a balcony that looked out on the Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere. Wonderful. We stayed there for the first year and loved it.

I looked in the *Daily American* and found a studio for rent several blocks away. Went up and rented a studio space that I occupied for the two years I was there. It was a complex of four studios. One was occupied by a Greek artist named Zoe Apostolides, and Gil Franklin of a famous art school in the east (that eludes my stroke-damaged brain), and Paul and Elise Suttman.

The Suttmans had recently bought a house in Tuscany. Every weekend he would go off carrying a window frame, or some such, for the work he was doing on his house. One weekend he asked me if I would carry some heavy stuff in my Volkswagen Camper which was always parked outside the studio against the wall of the prison across the street from the studio front door. (Reason for parking the van against the prison wall was that an armed guard at the top watched over the street and no one dared tamper with any of the vehicles parked there.)

### Arezzo And Friends And Memories

I was envious because he told me that there was a house for sale that was interesting and so we took off that very weekend. I liked his house very much. It was small but had possibilities. It was on a steep hillside and parking was difficult.

The house he showed me was very large and on a hill also but parking was not a problem. I talked with the owner, Giovachino Lunghi, who had built a house right on the highway. He used the ancient farmhouse for storage and general farm use. He had chickens and rabbits in the house. The house was solid enough. Built of stone with a courtyard (most unusual for farmhouses), one caved-in room upstairs. A lovely kitchen area with great possibilities and lots of storage space. The entire cost for the house and three acres of land was \$5,600. I bought the place that afternoon.

That was 1970. In the twenty-six years that I was there, I think we spent about \$31,000.00. New floors upstairs. A bathroom and repairs on the hayloft that became an adjunct to the studio that I never used for anything but minor storage. It was a place that gave us a lot of summer pleasure and work time.

We took trips in the car that I kept there but not enough according to Fran and I now agree with her. But we did see a lot and made a lot of friends among the Italians there. Lots of other friends in various foreign services and pursuits. One friend in particular is Tom Richardson who became British Ambassador to Rome. He lives three-quarters of a mile from our house and his ambassador's residence in Rome was the Villa Wolkonsky which was a stopover for us. Tom married an American girl that had worked for the *Readers Digest*, Alexandra. She came to me when they first moved to our area and bought a house. I helped her get some garden person and we became fast friends with frequent visits.

Osvaldo Righi is an interesting and good friend. Half Italian and half French. He bought an abandoned castle, Ceninna, and restored it partially and developed a cultural center there with a preponderance of concert events. He conducts a ceramics operation there also and sells a lot of work.

All the people in the area that I know are doing interesting things. Muriel Spark, the writer, lives close by and I correspond with her and her secretary Penelope Jardine. Life was not dull there with the work that we both did and the interesting people around us.

Then come 1995 and I decided that we had been there for twenty-six years and maybe it was time to move on. It is a good thing that I did because I had a stroke two years later. I sold it to a Swiss family from Zurich who were friends of Wolf Rogosky who owned an advertising agency in Zurich and who bought one of my paintings to take to his home outside of Paris.

The family who bought my house had his own ad agency in Zurich also. Rogosky recommended that they look at my house. Theophil Butz and his wife Marcy were the ones that Rogosky urged to look at the place. Marcy Butz and her young son were the ones who decided to look at the house. We had just left and returned to Kentfield. Marcy had to go in town to get the key from Vanneschi, my friend in town who took care of the vineyard on our property. As she passed our house which was on a hill visible from the road, she said to her son, "That is the kind of house I would like." When she got the key from Vanneschi he brought her to the house that she pointed out to her son. Love at first sight.

The story ends tragically. Fran and I went up to Zurich to close the deal. Butz took us to dinner at the Kronenhalle that Fran and I had been to some years before but were seated and served in a different and ordinary section of the restaurant. Known customers got special treatment. They have a main dining room filled with a priceless collection of French Impressionist paintings. Butz is an old customer and we were seated under a Pierre Matisse painting. We had a very impressive waiter who brought us lovely foods and wines. After supper we sat in the bar room and had nightcaps. We went back to our hotel and the next night we invited the Butzs to the same restaurant. Same seating, same waiter and lovely foods and wine. Finished up at the bar and back to the hotel to prepare for early morning departure by Swiss Air to Florence and home.

A couple of days later I called the Butz residence and got shocking news. Marcy Butz had an appointment for a physical checkup the day that we left Zurich. She found out that she had a very aggressive form of breast cancer. She was only forty-six years old and had a seven year old child and a happy marriage. It stunned us both. I kept in touch with them both and December 17<sup>th</sup> of 1997 I had a stroke on my right side. Therapy improved my condition enormously and I felt thankful that I was left handed and could paint.

We corresponded and in June of 1998 I got the saddest letter I've ever gotten from Marcy Butz. Her cancer had metastasized to her liver and much to her horror her eyes. I kept in touch by phone. One day I called her residence and her husband said she had gone to Florida for a very special treatment and gave me her number. I called right away and she was very upbeat. When I called a couple of days later I was told that she had gone back to Zurich. So I called Zurich and her husband



said she was in the hospital there. I got the hospital but Marcy was under sedation and couldn't talk. She died a couple of days later. What an uncertain lottery life is! So sad!

Anyway, I've kept in touch with her husband Theophil. He uses the house in Tuscany with his son as much as he can. And we went back for a month's visit and stayed with a friend who owned a lot of property and had had a silk factory that was no longer useable that way. He converted that large establishment into studios for rent. He has other properties he rents.

Recently I had a small heart attack that forced a pacemaker on me. My walking deteriorated and I now use a walker. But I can paint and am doing so, and I'm thankful for that and for some promising developments in my work. I just finished a reception for a show that Fran and I have running in Vacaville. It was well attended and we both sold some work, which was very satisfying. Suzanne B. Riess, who is currently interviewing me for an oral history of my career for the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley, came to the reception and filmed the event.

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<sup>1</sup>Further accounts of this period follow in separate appendices.



### Shipboard--the Aborted Venezuela Trip

It was around 1949 or '50 that I decided that we should take a trip to Venezuela. I booked passage on a freighter that was coming from China and would dock in San Francisco. In due time it arrived and Fran and I boarded it. I can't remember how many passengers there were, but I will try to list them. There was a Chinese woman in her thirties who was married to a Chinese man living in Panama. She had been studying in China and hadn't seen her husband for three years. Benno Springer and his wife Rita from Managua, Nicaragua, were on the trip. Benno was a former soldier in Hitler's army. We became good friends for many years. There was a young and attractive woman from Panama. And two women whose names I can't recall and who kept pretty private. My damaged memory fails to recall any others.

Anyway, we sailed out of the Golden Gate and commenced a lovely voyage. Our meals were always at the captain's table. He was new to the ship and a stranger to the crew, which became apparent as time went on. The first thing that happened was some crew member had tried to get at the young Panamanian woman in her cabin. The Captain took care of that in some way that he didn't divulge.

Prior to embarkation I had gone to a "Funny Store" to buy some funny gadgets that would provide some laughs during the voyage. I must say that they worked well in helping to get on a friendly basis with the other passengers.

We all got very friendly with most of the passengers and received invitations in Panama and Managua. I told the Captain that I wouldn't be on the ship for the full voyage. He didn't like that, but since I was not demanding a refund, he had to accept the fact. I can't remember why there was a limited disembarkation in Panama, but there was. The Chinese woman had arranged a dinner for all of us, by phone, with her husband. She offered to stay on the ship and traverse the Canal and pick up a ride back. We accepted that idea and disembarked at Panama City. The Panamanian woman had also invited us to supper with her and her family, but we declined that and went instead to the Chinese dinner party. And what a party! It was wonderful, with Chinese food that we had not eaten before.

The Springers wanted us in Managua to stay with them for a bit. We accepted. From Panama we flew to Managua. I should add here that the reason for a ship trip was because Fran was afraid of flying. Wouldn't you know it! On the flight to Managua we sat way forward in the aircraft and across the aisle were two big airplane wheels with tires on. What for? I never found out and it didn't make Fran feel too good. Anyway, we landed in Managua and took a bus into town.

On the way we had to stop and let a sizeable convoy of armed soldiers escorting an automobile in which was dictator Somoza--not my favorite person. We made it to Managua and I telephoned the Springers and Benno came and picked us up. We stayed with them for several days of sightseeing and wonderful food and with the best coffee I have ever tasted. Benno Springer was a manager in an import firm in Managua and made a good living.

From Managua we flew to Guatemala City where there was a friend I had met on a flight from Milan, Italy, in which the Alitalia plane we had taken from Rome had to make an emergency maneuver in landing to avoid a collision with another plane that was taking off. It turned out that the maneuver damaged the engines and it only became noticeable after we took off from Milan. They had to land in Canne, France. Alitalia had to put us up in a hotel.

For a planeload of people to be placed in a hotel together after a near accident become the catalyst for getting to know one another. This is how we met Bill Aseena, a Guatemalan exile working for Aluminium Limited of Canada in Spain. When the plane was repaired, we went on to Madrid, a leg of our journey and the destination for Bill Aseena. I had booked the Florida Hotel for our stay in Madrid. Our stay in that city included the Prado Museum as well as excursions into the countryside. Bill Aseena took us to lunch at his club where Francisco Franco was also a member. One of my reading passions was accounts of the Spanish Civil War and I took a very dim view of Mr. Franco. Anyway, this last paragraph was to introduce you to Bill Aseena.

I had been corresponding with Bill for some time. As time went on, changes in Guatemalan politics made it possible for Bill to return to his country and resume his engineering capabilities. Our plane landed in Guatemala City. I had Bill's address and took a taxi to see where Bill lived so I could call him when we got settled. As we got to the house we saw a group of armed soldiers guarding the house. Perplexed we drove on and went to Antigua, a famous town not too far from Guatemala City. The largest hotel there was empty. We were the only guests. A revolution was purported to be afoot. We knew about that before we got there but I had been through the same rumors in Panama City and nothing happened. Besides, it was our wedding anniversary the next day.

They had only a skeleton staff on duty at the hotel but I asked about getting a Marimba band to play for us at supper time. They arranged that very easily. We were the only two people in that large dining room and danced to some very good Marimba music. I love the sound of that instrument. I'm not great at dancing but managed to fumble along with that music. The remaining staff of the hotel watch us do this crazy thing.

Our dilemma was what to do next and where to go, but it was getting spooky and seemed like the revolution was not just a rumor.

In wandering around Antigua an elderly woman heard us speaking English. She approached us and introduced herself as Mrs. Field. We got the impression that she was part of the Chicago Marshall Field retail store family. In any case, we visited her home and had a nice visit. She knew all about Bill Aseena. I know that Bill had come back to his homeland and I corresponded with him until recently. What I didn't know is that he developed a pasteurization system for dairies because undulant fever was a problem in his city. I don't remember whether she said that Bill produced pasteurized milk or that he patented the process. But in any case, he was held responsible for the outbreak of undulant fever that occurred soon after the process was initiated. Opposition forces spiked the milk with undulant fever germs, according to Mrs. Field, because Bill didn't "grease palms." That was tragic. I tried writing to Bill but got no response. I never did know all the details of what happened. Bill died shortly after of heart failure.

We left Antigua after a short stay and came home--by plane I might add.

### To Hamburg, Dusseldorf, Copenhagen, and Rome for a Pucci Dress

Working for the *Saturday Evening Post* got me a number of sales of illustrations that I was able to resell with a fee for "second rights" at \$300 and requests for my services for advertising projects.

One year (it escapes me but it seems the 1950s) I had two requests for sale of second rights in England and Denmark, plus an advertising request from Dusseldorf and Hamburg, Germany. I gave myself some time to do all this. I was able to get the illustration from the Post and send it to London to be used for a fiction piece in the Manchester Guardian. I boarded a plane that flew the polar route to Copenhagen. I spent some time with my client there who was most cordial and served tea on our first meeting. We conducted our business and I wandered around lovely Copenhagen. I ran into Dr. and Mrs. Fletcher who lived up the street from us in Kentfield. They were there for a few days and were leaving soon. It was an amazing coincidence I thought. Anyway, I loved Copenhagen and was most impressed with Tivoli Gardens in which I spent an entire day.

From Copenhagen I boarded a Lufthansa flight to Hamburg. I asked the airline stewardess for a recommendation for a place to stay. She gave me an address of a woman who let out rooms in a big house. I stayed there one night and the next day I had an address out of town and had to take a train to get there. I went to the railroad station and looked at the schedule for trains. To my surprise I found the place on the schedule and was able to get there without any trouble. The person I met spoke English pretty well. We conducted our business and I left. I stayed in a hotel in Hamburg that night and boarded another Lufthansa flight to Dusseldorf. The request was from an ad agency in that city. They wanted me to do some cigarette advertising for them at a ridiculously low price and I refused the job and left.

I took another Lufthansa flight to Amsterdam where I had a friend that I met in San Francisco when he had come there. He lived in Hilversum just outside Amsterdam. I had his phone number and called. His wife said he was away for a week. I didn't want to stay around that long and gave my regrets. I took some canal rides one day and the rest of the next day I spent in the Rijksmuseum and saw all those elegant Dutch paintings and great Vermeers. I had a small hotel in Amsterdam, a sort of "bed and breakfast" place.

From Amsterdam I took a flight to London, and from London I would fly home on a British airline. On the way to London I decided, thinking that Fran would be waiting for me in New York about four days from then, that I had time to fly to Rome and buy her a Pucci dress which I really liked, and at the same time see if artist Foppiani lived in Rome. I had bought a semi-abstract painting of his in San Francisco titled "The Landlady and the Jealous Goats." Surely, he must live in Rome.

I booked on a United Arab airline. It was a new experience for me. A lot of Arab passengers carrying all sorts of stuff into the cabin--spooky. Then when we got to Rome the pilot dove the plane at a steeper angle than I had ever flown. We landed safely though. As we were being transported by bus into Rome, I heard an American man and woman discussing the scary dive into Rome airports. I found a seat next to them and commiserated with them. They were so glad to see a compatriot that



they invited me to their hotel which was the Eden. We got up to their room and ordered a gin and tonic for me but nothing for them. They informed me then that they were former alcoholics on the mend and didn't dare start on liquor. He told me that he was an advertising agency executive. I corresponded with him for a few years.

I left them and found a small pension up the street from the Eden and the next morning I went around to Pucci's and bought Fran an elegant dress. The rest of the day I spent going to galleries and asking about Foppiani. Finally one gallerist knew of him and said that the artist lived in north Italy, Piacenza, and showed in Rome at the Obelisco Gallery on the Via Sistina. I went over to the Obelisco right away. To my great surprise Foppiani was there for a group show they were having that night. What luck.

I went to the reception that night and met the owner, Dal Corso, and his wife, and Cesare Bellici, his partner. People from New York were there and sales were brisk. I bought three small things, one Foppiani, one Armodio, and one Carlo Berte--Berte was there with Foppiani. They both convinced me that I should go up to Piacenza with them the next day in their Fiat 500. A tiny vehicle. That would make me late to meet Fran in New York if I stayed very long in Piacenza. But I said OK, that I would meet them in front of the Eden Hotel in the morning.

The next morning I checked out of the pension and took a taxi the few blocks to the Hotel Eden. I put my bags up front with the driver and he drove to the hotel and put my baggage on the sidewalk and drove off after I paid the fare plus tip. He had deposited my stuff on the sidewalk, all but the Pucci dress that was in a box. It all happened so quickly that I didn't notice the dress was missing until a couple of minutes after he left. I rushed into the hotel and at the desk I told them what had happened. The doorman didn't see the driver and it became hopeless in minutes. Foppiani and Berte arrived after twenty minutes and we took off in their tiny Fiat 500 on an all night ride up to Piacenza. We had drinks all the way up. We would stop and buy more wine when we ran out.

Early the next morning we arrived in Piacenza. They deposited me in a hotel and said they would pick me up in a couple of hours for a party they intended having. I didn't get a chance to sleep at all.

They had a party in their studio with the landlady and her husband Armodio, Berte and a couple of others, all in their studio which was full of interesting things. The landlady was a gorgeous woman and it fit the painting I had bought--the three artists were the jealous goats in the picture. We partied all that night, and the next day, after a slight rest, they had me go with them to a monastery that made a potent liquor that was ghastly. I have a photo of the studio of these artists which includes the landlady.

Other events took place and time was moving. Fran didn't know that I was in Italy. She got to New York and didn't find me there. She phoned London BOAC to find out if a plane had crashed. She was at her wit's end. I tried to convince my friends in Piacenza that I should call New York and they finally allowed that I should. I can't remember exactly what I did, but I think I phoned the hotel we were going to meet at and left a message that I would be arriving shortly and have her wait there.

I eventually got to New York--thus ended a saga--with no Pucci dress. But I did meet Foppiani, Armodio and Carlo Berte. I corresponded with them for a few years until Foppiani died unexpectedly and Carlo moved to Milan. I continued to correspond with Armodio who became very successful.



### The SS Saturnia, a Car, and on to Corte Frediani

In 1952, Fran and I decided that we, as a family, should go to Italy. The boys were old enough to travel and we thought it would broaden their knowledge of the world they lived in. I made reservations on the Saturnia, an Italian liner of World War I days. Fran and I had never traveled by ship and it was an exciting prospect, and it turned out to be so. We all boarded the ship and stood at the rail and waved goodbye to the crowd on the dock. After a couple of blasts on the ship's whistle, we slowly moved out into the harbor and out to sea.

Our cabin was in the middle of the ship and accommodated us perfectly. On our way out to sea an agitated steward came up to me and announced to me that my youngest son, Tom, was walking on top of the railing between lifeboats and was in danger of falling off the ship. I quickly put a stop to that. We had a table assigned to us for meals. I must say that the food was gorgeous as were the desserts. The boys surprised us--they just wouldn't touch the desserts and ate plain food, but when we got ashore they wanted desserts. Amazing behavior!

Our first stop was Barcelona, Spain. Our ship docked and opposite our ship was a freighter with a name Alonzo Ramon, the middle name of our boys: Timothy Alonzo and Thomas Ramon. We all walked into town through bunches of armed soldiers patrolling the streets amid a lot of civil war destruction that still hadn't been cleaned up. We looked around and got back to the ship in the time we were allotted.

The Saturnia's next stop was Genoa where we were supposed to meet my mother who had come to Italy for taking care of property that Peter Bona had left her in Piedmont. We arrived in Genoa and met my mother. She left the next day for Lucca where we would eventually arrive also and spend some time with her.

I had in mind to buy a Hillman Minx station wagon that I had seen back home. With that idea in mind, we took a train to Milan, and boarded a British Airways plane to London. British pilots are "something else." After we took off, the pilot came into the passenger section. He saw my two sons and invited them into the cockpit and let the boys handle the plane. We were in the Alps and I felt the plane wiggle. I questioned Tom today and he confirmed that the pilot had let he and Tim control the plane for a few moments. I can't remember what the plane was, but it was a two-engine plane with a wing above the fuselage.

We arrived in London, found a hotel, and I made my way to the Rootes dealership and bought the Hillman Minx station wagon with the steering wheel for American roads. (The British have the wheel on the right side.) I really had problems with that in England. Right at the outset, leaving Rootes, I got into a stream of traffic, came to a turnabout and wanted to peel off to the left and found no way of signaling that. It was pretty scary but I made it. The other thing was the bushes that a lot of roads had on the left side. Coming to a turn in the road it was difficult to see much of what lay around the curve. If you were on the right side of the vehicle you got a better view of what lay ahead.

After an overnight in London we took off for Dover for a Channel crossing to France. We crossed to France and headed south. It was lunchtime when we started south and we were all hungry. I didn't know any French, so it was difficult to order food, but we did get something to eat. When we left the restaurant, we again headed south and before we got out of the town I saw a hitchhiker in kilts. He was going to Rouen. I had never been to Rouen. He had a map and we started for that city. I can't remember whether we made it that day or not. Hitchhikers usually knew of youth hostels and would stay in those while we used hotels. Anyway, we did get to Rouen and left the Scottish boy there. Fran wanted to see the famous cathedral so we found that. She and the boys went in while I stayed outside talking with a woman selling souvenirs who spoke some English. She interested me.

We headed south again and at the edge of Rouen we came upon two more hitchhikers, a man and a woman. I stopped and found that they were a young Dutch couple who were married, medical students whose medical education was interrupted by World War II. I can't remember whether they had finished their medical studies or not, but it was certain that they were on a holiday. They spoke good English. They were headed for a famous city--it escapes my memory at the moment--in southeastern France. I had never been there either. They seemed like good company and most interesting, so I invited them to join us for the few days that it might take. We got along well.

We made our way across France, buying food to picnic with. At night they would select a town that had "youth hostels" while we would find a hotel that wasn't too expensive. At a prearranged time the next day, we would pick them up and proceed on our way. It was a lovely arrangement and very rewarding. We left them at their destination and then we had to cross France in a westerly direction. We set off right away because it was afternoon and we had to find a place to stay and have supper. We found a great place--I do remember that, but not the name. We had a wonderful supper and lovely accommodations at a low price. The next day we started for the coast and Cannes in particular. I can't remember whether we made it in one day. All I do remember is that we descended on Cannes and were glad to be there on the ocean where the boys could let off steam.

From Cannes we went into Italy. I can't remember that we picked up any hitchhikers in Italy, but we may have. On our way to Rome later, we did pick up one who was miserable, but that is a separate story.

We made our way to Lucca and Parezanna and the Corte Frediani. We found it, but found that my mother had gone to the beach not too far away, Viareggio. They had an address where she was staying and a phone number. I called but couldn't raise her, so we decided to go to the beach and see her. We got to the place and the owners said she was down at the beach, so we went down there and my God it was crowded. They had rolled red carpets for corridors that lined the beach toward the water. There were zillions of people. What a situation! I sent Tim in one direction and Tom in another direction. I started looking in the middle. In a moment Tom came running back and said he had found her. She was sitting in a canvas chair and in her bathing costume. To find her in that huge crowd was a miracle. We finally got her back to the digs she was renting. She had paid for a couple of more days there and would come back to Corte Frediani then.

We went back to Corte Frediani. Relatives put the boys up and fed them and gave them wine. Tim drank wine, and when he rode the bicycle they loaned him he was tipsy and veered into a ditch. I didn't think anything of it, but the next morning he didn't feel well and that worried me. If he had something contagious it would mean quarantine and staying there longer than I wanted. He felt warm



to my touch and I asked for a thermometer. They brought out an underarm one which I had never seen before. Then I asked for the nearest doctor and was told that there was one close by. We went to see him and he assured me, for fifty cents, that Tim was only suffering a gastric upset and nothing contagious.

Fran and I slept in the bed that my mother and her sister Teresina slept in when they were girls. I met all inhabitants of Corte Frediani and corresponded with them for a while. One of the cousins was running a store in Lucca and doing well enough. They were all an interesting bunch. One of the bunch had been a sculptor who got commissions for gravestones and was quite good. He was the only artist amongst them.

My mother returned from her beach sojourn and we had a good visit. She had accomplished what she had wanted and was quite ready to go back home. We left and headed for Rome. Outside of Florence I picked up a young Austrian boy who was headed for Rome. He seemed nice and we made room for him. He soon showed another aspect of his character that was new to me. He seemed to take exception to the familiarity of the boys speech with Fran and me. It seemed to indicate big differences in family life in Austria from ours. Other things showed up.

Along the way to Rome I saw a town up on a hill that looked interesting to me and found a road that led up to it. The young Austrian spoke up and said, "You told me that you were going to Rome." "Yes, we are, but I'd like to see this town for a moment or two." He sulked a bit while I looked over the town, but we were soon on the road again to Rome. We arrived in Rome in mid-afternoon. As we drove forward I spotted a hotel where I wanted to drop off the family before taking him to a Catholic hostelry that he had arranged for. He made it plain that he didn't want me to stop, but I did anyway. He wanted me to take him directly to his destination.

When I got him to the hostelry he told me that he wanted to stay there longer than he had arranged. He indicated that money was his problem, so I gave him a little cash to get rid of him. He later wrote to me in California asking if I would sponsor him. I didn't reply.



### Great Fosters, Egham, Surrey

After a stay in Rome, we made our ways back through Paris to Boulogne for a Channel crossing to England. There was a terrible storm on the Channel at that moment so we stayed overnight in a hotel in Wimeroux. We crossed to Dover the next day in a calmer sea. We wanted to stay in a hotel outside of London and I started asking anyone I would meet where I could stay that would be good for a family. Trust Houses were the invariable answer and I was told where there was one, but the directions were hazy.

We got to a bridge that crossed a stream and I stopped the car and looked around. I saw a man close by and I beckoned to him. He approached and I asked him where a Trust House would be. The upshot was that he climbed in the car and directed us to Great Fosters, a very large Elizabethan structure set about with expensive automobiles parked in the driveway. It looked expensive and I remarked about it. Mr. Luce, the man I picked up, said, "Go in anyway and find out how much it will cost." I did, and it wasn't too expensive. I got the family out and registered them and went out to the car to take Mr. Luce back to where I had picked him up. As we started back, he told me that he had stayed at the Great Fosters when he was a child and that I would like it.

As we went up the road we passed a pub. I suggested that we stop and have a drink, which we did. I had my first taste of beer in England, warm beer. While we were at the bar we had a conversation. I found out that his car was being repaired and that it would be ready in a few days. With that, I invited him to stay at the Great Fosters and he accepted. We made our way back and when we got there, he unloosened his raincoat and I was horrified to see that his shirt collar was dirty. I had some horrible feelings that I had picked up a tramp. I went into the hotel and told the receptionist what I had done. She had a room for him and urged me to have him use it. Reluctantly I went back to the car and told Mr. Luce that there was a place for him. I got a shirt out of my bag and gave it to him. He took it with seeming good grace and we went into the hotel. I told him to meet us in the dining room in an hour.

I went to our room and told Fran what I had done. She accepted the fact. When we came downstairs, we passed the bar and Mr. Luce was having a sherry with the other guests who were all well dressed as compared with Mr. Luce. We brought him to the table. He picked up the wine list and started telling us about the best wines on the list and interspersing that with, "You need a guide while you are here, and I am free to do it." I was quick to deny him the privilege. I had heard that an old-fashioned stage coach was due to arrive at a near town the next day and I wanted to photograph it on its arrival at an inn in that town. I insisted that we go there on our way to where I was going to take him. He reluctantly agreed.

The next morning, after breakfast, we departed. He wanted to be left off in Egham which was walking distance from Great Fosters. His next request was to be left off at Virginia Waters, a small town nearby. After I had photographed the stagecoach that had arrived from Southampton, we proceeded to Virginia Waters. As he got out he said, "I feel ill, and think someone has given me something that upset me." "Goodbye, Mr. Luce," and I departed.

That evening after supper I went off and sat in the lounge room. There was another man there and as we were engaging in a conversation the manager of the place came bouncing in and made his way to the man sitting next to me and engaged him in a conversation. He looked over at me and asked me where Mr. Luce was. When I told him that I had picked him up and transported him to Virginia Waters, he burst out laughing. "That's where the local looney bin is," he said. Thus ended that episode.

Our stay at the Great Fosters was a milestone adventure for all of us. We were there for ten days and made a lot of friends that we have kept in contact with to the present and hopefully beyond. It was great. They had a swimming pool there run by an old Navy person. He would amuse the kids by walking the length of the pool underwater. I don't remember his name, but I do remember his joviality.

### Jeffrey Smart, Ermes DeZan

Tuscany was a joy to us for twenty-six years. I think I was the second American to buy an abandoned farmhouse in that area of Tuscany. Very shortly after I purchased that property, two other foreigners followed suit. Bob Katz, a writer from New York, and Jeffrey Smart, a painter from Australia. We became close friends with both of them.

Apparently the word got around that this was a good area for abandoned properties because in a short time the colony grew. Ermes DeZan, an Italian whose family lived in Australia, joined Jeffrey Smart. They were followed by Craig Ellwood, a noted architect from Los Angeles; Tom and Alexandra Richardson from the British Foreign Service--he was knighted, and became Ambassador to Rome, and he is just retired. His wife, Lady Alexandra, is a writer and an American and was with the *Reader's Digest* in Milan before she married Tom. Another friend was Osvaldo Righi from France, who studied in America. Righi bought an abandoned castle, Cennina, and developed a cultural center and holds concerts there and other events that we attended.

There are a number of Italians that speak English that we keep in touch with. Ugo and Kajsa Zaccheo, a former Alitalia executive, Antonio and Giovanna Fileccia, an Alitalia executive also, Iolanda Gardino, a former opera singer who lives in Genoa but has a house in Pergine and has a lot of dinner parties there and would be lots of fun. June Cassell, who was secretary to J. Paul Getty, the oil magnate, retired and living in Mercatale not far from our house. She finally sold her house and moved to Vancouver, B.C. where her sister lived. We corresponded frequently until her death two years ago.

Ruth Kinche from New York and native of Zurich bought a house that we all love overlooking Pieve a Presciano. She is a designer. U.S. Navy Captain Jim La Farge and Mrs. L. F. at Casciano, Mary and Henry Heuser, San Martino. Henry was an important intelligence officer in World War II. Mr. and Mrs. Leo Lionni, prominent New York artist, Rada in Chianti. Joan Suter from Zurich. Colonel and Midge Dawson--he was the first visitor I had the first day we occupied the farmhouse and we became fast friends for years until he died.

Dame Muriel Spark, noted writer from Scotland. I would see her and her secretary Penelope Jardine often and carry on a correspondence with both of them. Kaspar Van Arx and Cristina--she is a noted ceramicist and exhibits world-wide. He farms. Maria Nuti and Maria Pia, Rome and Forte dei Marmi. He was president of Univac Europe. John Hull from Canada married an Italian girl and is developing properties. He worked for me for a while. His father was a noted Canadian ice hockey player.



## **The Rattazzis**

We met young Gianluca Rattazzi at the Ancona's when he came over from Rome to attend UC physics classes. We got to know him well and finally met his father, Count Urbano Rattazzi, and his wife, Countess Fannie Rattazzi. From then on, when we went to the house in Tuscany for the summer, we would first fly to Rome and arrive late in the day. The Rattazzis would insist we stay with them overnight in their Parioli apartment. On our way back to the U.S. they insisted that we stay with them a couple of days. We did that for some time until Fannie became ill with cancer. Shortly before she died, her daughter Cristiana was traveling in Spain and was killed in an auto accident. A double blow for the family. It was a heavy moment for all of us.

Gianluca had married a lovely girl from a prominent Roman family shortly before all of this happened, and was living in California. He had graduated from Cal with honors and commenced studies with Guido Severi at Lawrence Livermore Labs, a noted collaborator with Enrico Fermi on the atom bomb project. Gianluca progressed from there to working with Olivetti Computer Co. of Milan, Italy. From that he progressed to his own computer company and is now a millionaire. I see Gianluca and Chiara fairly frequently. He established an apartment in San Francisco that he uses on weekends, and we visit him there occasionally. He now has three children, two boys and a girl, Cristiana who is the oldest.

Gianluca's father comes over from Rome to visit the family and for sessions with the noted Indian cardiologist, Dr. Chattergie, from Stanford who treats him successfully for a minor heart problem. Gianluca and family live in Los Gatos and come to their apartment in on weekends, and when the Count arrives they invariably bring him over to visit us.

One summer, before Fannie became ill, they stayed in our house here while we were in Tuscany. Gianluca was still in school at the time. He would drive to school in my Pontiac Firebird. He gleefully told me that it was a wonderful car and that he could comfortably go ninety miles per hour on the Richmond Bay Bridge! The Rattazzi family liked our house and entertained a number of their friends from Rome who would travel about and were in the area.

## **Muriel Spark and Her Cat**

One summer, while in Tuscany, a cat turned up in our courtyard. He looked as if he needed friendship so I took him into the house and fed him. He devoured the food and that told me that he had been cast out of his home for whatever reason. He had only one peculiarity, I noticed that when I picked up a broom he would disappear into another room. That indicated to me that he had been somewhat abused. So I became careful not to pick up a broom in his presence nor to have Fran do it either.

We got very fond of that cat and settled on a name for him: The Baron. What we didn't think of was what we would do when we went back to California. That got solved just before it was time for us to leave. We had Muriel Spark and her secretary Penelope Jardine for lunch. They had a bunch of

cats at their house in Oliveto. I didn't think they would need another cat but I asked them anyway. They were delighted.

There was an English veterinarian in Arezzo and we called him to see if he would give the cat the shots he needed and he agreed. I got a cardboard box to put the cat in but when I tried to get him in that box he became a wriggling mass of fur. It was utterly impossible to get him in that box, but I finally did.

We drove him to Arezzo in great discomfort. He got out of the box and frantically roamed the car looking for an escape. I had rolled the windows to an inch of the top to let some air in the car. It was uncomfortably hot but we endured it. With some difficulty we got The Baron into the vet's clinic. The vet had a hard time with this cat but finally prevailed and put him in a cage for us. We got him home without any trouble.

We had a date for dinner with Muriel and Penelope several days later. I didn't look forward to getting The Baron back into that cage and I was nervous about it. Fran had a brilliant idea. She had some tranquilizer pills and suggested breaking one up and getting the cat to swallow it. With some difficulty and adroitness I was able to get one down his throat. It worked and after a bit he calmed down and fell asleep. So we delivered a tranquil cat. We took him upstairs to Muriel's bedroom sound asleep. When we came upstairs after dinner to look at him, he was still asleep. He came out of his slumbers and joined the other five cats on the premises for a good but short life.

Some months later they found him at a far end of their property, shot by some hunters. Italian hunters kill cats because cats kill birds that Italians love to eat. Muriel and Penelope have lost a number of cats that way over the years.



### June Churchill

It must have been around 1980 when a couple of ladies that Jeffrey Smart employed came to see me and told me that they needed my help with an English woman at Jeffrey's house that was going to occupy his place while he prepared for exhibitions of his paintings in London galleries. The woman didn't speak a word of Italian and it was a dilemma for the Italian help.

I dashed over and translated her wishes and invited her to supper with us. She accepted. I rushed home and told Fran. Fran got busy and prepared an adequate meal for the three of us. I only knew the woman's given name, June. It turned out that her surname was Churchill and that she was Randolph Churchill's former wife and mother of young Winston--June said "young Winston" and I took it to mean the son she had by Randolph and named after his grandfather. Anyway, we had a nice cordial visit over a good meal.

In the two weeks that Jeffrey was away, we partied together several times. She had Derek Hart down from London and his lady friend, Lady Selina Hastings. Derek worked for BBC in London. Both quite young according to my eye. I had them all over to my house for dinner with some of my friends, specifically U.S. Navy Captain Jim La Farge, related to the famous La Farge, the painter, Mrs. La Farge and their two daughters, Edwina and Antoinette. Edwina was down from Paris where she was employed by the fashion periodical "Women's Wear Daily." (We have photos of all these occasions.) On that occasion, Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. La Farge sat off to one side and had an earnest conversation evidently about something they had in common.

The La Farges then invited us all up the Cacciano, an abandoned town where he had bought one of the houses. And I corresponded with June Churchill when she went back to London, until she died. She had a cancer that she must have had when she was in Tuscany. She was a member of some group that helped suicide, and that is what she did.

In 1982 Fran and I decided to get to Italy on the Orient Express. We took a plane to London. I had written to Lady Selina Hastings and got a reply that invited us to dinner at her flat. We did that and it was a party of people which included her boyfriend, Derek Hart, a nice guy that had joined us in Tuscany for one of the dinner parties we had for Selina and June. During the party in London, Selina told me that she had joined the London Police as a policewoman. She had a lot of trouble with that because the male "Bobbies" seemed to resent her presence as a titled gal. Anyway, it was amusing for me to hear that she would have to enter "pubs" to break up altercations and all the other difficulties she had. She finally gave it up. I can't remember what she said she was doing at the moment.

We were in London for three days. I had gone to Harrods to buy a good bottle of port to bring to Lady Selina and it staggered me to see all the different port wines that Harrods had and the various prices. Evidently port wine is a big thing in England. At the hotel we stayed at there was a tea kettle on a burner that intrigued me. I went out and bought one and had it sent to California. I still have it

and it operates like a charm. It is stainless steel and turns off when it comes to a boil. I had melted a number of kettles on the electric burners on my stove and this kettle obviated those hazards.

On the morning of departure we went to the railroad station and there was the Orient Express. They had a boarding procedure where your name was checked off of a list and then you were escorted to your assigned car and seated by a man elegantly uniformed. There we had a surprise. Across the aisle and one seat back was a friend of Fran's and her new husband. Her name previously was Kaufman. He owned a couple of reputable stores in San Anselmo and San Rafael. We had a pleasant time with them on the trip. Our first meal was an elegant lunch with another couple at our assigned table.

We crossed the Channel on a train ferry that night. I left Fran and went topside on the ferry to get some fresh air and see the sights. It was lovely and bracing. We then disembarked the train ferry and went on to Paris where we picked up more passengers. All in all, it was a lovely journey, very festive and elegant. We got off at the end of the line, which was Venice at the time.

We got a hotel and called Countess Elsie Gozzi. She was a friend of Virginia Taylor, an interior designer. We had met the Countess twice at the Taylor residence and once at the Ancona's residence. Virginia had telephoned Gozzi and told her we would be coming and the Countess told Virginia to have us phone her on our arrival, which we did. The Countess sent her boat to pick us up and take us to the Giudecca where she lived. We got there about 2:00 p.m. and spent the entire afternoon with her.

She runs the Fortuny fabrics factory. Fortuny was a famous fabric designer and gown maker. When he died, he left the running of his factory to Elsie and taught her his methods for printing fabrics. Elsie had run his store in New York years earlier and then his store in Venice. While in Venice she married Count Gozzi who died some time later. When Fortuny died, he left the operation of the factory to Elsie who he had trained, and the monitoring of the Fortuny Museum in Venice that houses all his designing efforts and the many gowns that became so famous. The ownership was left to family, I think, but I'm hazy on that. Anyway, the whole visit was lovely and ended up with Elsie taking us in her boat to Venice and supper at Harry's Bar--most elegant. After supper, we saw her to her boat and then back to our hotel.

We corresponded with Elsie until she died several years later.



### **Foremost McKesson Exhibit, Nut Tree Gallery**

Oddly enough, my entry into gallery showing happened through my stamp designing for the US Postal Service.

Betty Dondero, a close friend, was secretary to William Morrison, the CEO of Foremost McKesson, who was a collector of stamps. By that time, 1974, I had already designed some. Betty told her boss that she knew the designer of the stamps that he showed her. That led to his driving over to see me for the signing of them. I signed them for him and then we visited for awhile. I showed him what I was working on currently. That gave him an idea to have a show of my work in the Executive Suite of Foremost McKesson Corporation. He wanted to have his personnel see the work. I agreed with the plan and assembled pieces for the show.

Morrison assigned his public relations man to put the show together. He did a very good job, and I should remember the name of that good looking and energetic young man, but I can't remember at this moment. His career took a dramatic turn a short time after the exhibit and bears telling about later in this piece. Anyway, he designed a poster from a dramatic large painting of a Stellar Jay perched on a limb of a tree. The bird was looking down with an angry and raucous attitude. The poster got distributed around as well as invitations with the same painting.

A reception was held up in the Executive Conference Room. Some personnel attended but not all. Some questions were asked of me and I answered as best I could. It all went satisfactorily.

The Foremost show had a variety of paintings. I hadn't settled on any particular subject matter yet, but was exploring Early Spanish California that had recently come to my notice. I was born and raised in San Francisco and exposed to names of places like Yerba Buena, Palo Alto, Vacaville. It just never occurred to me that the state had a Spanish beginning until I inadvertently picked up a book on that subject. The impact on my clogged brain was tremendous. At the library I ran into the Monterey artist Jo Mora and his book on that subject. He was a cowboy artist who had seen the tail end of that era and wrote and illustrated what he knew and observed of the period. After reading Jo Mora, I was hooked. I did a voluminous amount of research. Too, I engaged an academic Spanish historian named Rudi Larios who supplied me with accurate information on just about every aspect of life in those times.

With all this information, I started making studies and did thousands of them. I would scotch tape them to my walls of my studios in Italy and Kentfield. I still have the bulk of them and have recently been selling them quite successfully. I make studies for each painting being contemplated. One painting might take ten studies. I draw without models, by and large, and posing for myself in front of a mirror, if need be, and getting my wife to drape stuff on. But essentially I draw from my head. In looking over the thousands of studies I've accumulated, I'm seeing those with a fresh eye after a damaging illness. They seem more spirited than my paintings. All the essentials are there and that urges me to see if I can get the same spirit in a finish painting. I am giving it a try and having some small success.

Getting back to the Nut Tree show. It was lovely. They had a dinner reception for me and my guest, Mr. and Mrs. William Morrison and the Public Relations man whose name escapes me, all the pertinent Nut Tree personnel--it was just "peachy."

We sold quite a bit of work for a show like that and it led to other shows. Out of that show I met a gallery owner, Nancy Burroughs, who had a gallery in Clarksburg just outside of Sacramento. She was working for a Swiss pharmaceutical firm as a saleswoman and got around a lot and ran her gallery on weekends. She got a lot of places for me to show. The Robert Mondavi Winery, her gallery, the Crocker Museum, the Charles and Emma Frye Museum, Seattle. Nancy Burroughs represented me for two years until she had to help her husband in his oil exploration business that he had just started. I've kept in touch with her over the years and saw her and her husband Ernie at our last show. I must say that Nancy Burroughs got me started well and I owe her a lot.

Now to the public relations young man at Foremost McKesson. Shortly after my show at Foremost, this young man left his wife with a divorce and went east with another woman he married. Some months later he was in the news. He robbed a bank in New York and was arrested. Everybody at Foremost was agog. It was quite something. Evidently he and his new wife needed money. And who has cash? A bank, of course, but that isn't the way to withdraw it. What a crazy thing it was! Such is the human scene.

### When Is It Illustration? When a Painting?

You have asked me about the distinctions between illustration and painting.

In the case of fiction, the illustration performs a service for the publisher of the piece by attracting readers' interest. *What* is selected to characterize the fiction is as important as *How* you choose to do it. It is very much the same for non-fiction. *What* and *How* you choose to give importance to the fictional.

I remember clearly a marvelous book loaned to me by a girl student at art school when I was in a children's class there in 1927. It was "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom" by T.E. Lawrence, the famous Lawrence of Arabia. It was symbolically illustrated by Pierre Matisse and was a most elegant book and interesting to read. I read it from cover to cover. Fine artists often illustrated special books.

A painting is a personal visual exploration that expresses the painter's personality and human concern and interests. You either like and understand what the artist expresses, or you don't. That's it.

I admire and draw inspiration from the following artists:

Ben Shahn—I've read *The Shape of Content*, his Harvard Lectures, and the biography by his wife. I admire his intellect, his picture-making ability, his superb draughtsmanship and ability to capture attitudes of people, and not least his social consciousness and humanity.

Milton Avery--Absolutely wonderful at simplifying compositions and arriving at bare essentials. A great modernist who had influence on many artists of his time, including myself. We were visiting Fran's sister Florence in Alexandria, Virginia, many years ago. Fran came back from a visit in Washington, D.C., excited about an exhibition of Milton Avery at the Phillips Gallery. I had never heard of him, so I went to see that show and was thoroughly impressed. A book on Avery was later published and I bought it. Every time I look at it I'm stunned and try to simplify my own compositions. I make small increments of progress that keep my hopes up.

Piero della Francesca--Living close to Arezzo allowed me to be there quite often and I would visit the church that houses his great mural. It is wonderful and never ceases to stimulate me.

Botticelli is one of my favorites, as is Paolo Ucello. And of course the inventive and unique Leonardo da Vinci. Many trips to Florence and the Piazza della Signorina with its Palazzo Vecchio and the Uffizi Gallery were part of my life in Tuscany. I would buy art materials at Zecchi's close by. I was in Florence a lot, and I always felt fortunate for being there and viewing all that wonderful antiquity.



### A Conversation at a Luncheon for Stanley Galli

*In September 2002 Allan Littman and his wife Caroline Littman gave a luncheon at their home in Tiburon to honor the Gallis. The conversation starts on the patio with Allan Littman asking Stan Galli to talk about the Littmans' painting, "They Met Kearney at San Pasqual."*

Galli: The figures are all in battle in the painting by Paolo Ucello that I had seen. And I liked the idea of those lances sticking up. I had to figure out where the legs would go, and everything else, because you have to drill one horse after the other. The lead horse first, and then all the others followed. And there is the original sketch there. [looking at page of sketches he has given to Allan Littman that includes sketches and text]

Riess: You wrote, "Reading about the battle of San Pasqual triggered a latent pictorial idea that had never quite taken cohesive form for me. For a very long time a series of impressions of horsemen moving in line tantalized me."

It was an interesting challenge?

Galli: Yes, I liked the idea of the lances, and I had always liked Paolo Ucello. He had a painting of "The Battle of San Romano," and it inspired me to do this.

Littman: Remember this, "Three Card Monte?"

Riess: This looks so simple.

Galli: Well, I did pencil sketches to get the figures just right and to place them just right.

Littman: What if the *Post* hadn't folded up, Stan, do you think you would have continued as an illustrator?

Galli: I suppose. I'm not sure. But when it folded up—I wanted to paint. I went to Rome. I wanted to paint, really. I hadn't been painting at all, just illustrating. And it satisfied me. You [Riess] gave me a piece about Norman Rockwell. He wanted to paint. I knew he had gone to Paris, but I didn't realize—he talked about the money being an influence on him. But I think that's a lot of bull, really. He was a very folksy guy and he liked what he was doing, he reveled in it, really. You can tell. You can't do things like he did if you aren't keenly interested in people.

Littman: And what about you, Stan? When you went to Rome did you suddenly start saying, "I'm having a lot more fun than I was having as a commercial artist?"



Galli: No, not at all. I just—I was knocking it off. I decided it [illustration art] was something I had to drop, and to start painting. And you know, the first thing I did was a picture of Nixon. He bothered me. [laughter] He wasn't the kind of guy I'd like to go fishing with. I made a hell of a big picture of him, in the Capitol building and he was trapped in it. The dome was [tilted] back like a teapot lid, and he had a fly on his nose, and he couldn't swat it off!

Littman: Was this during the scandal?

Galli: No, this was 1969. I'll have to show that to you, Suzanne.

Anyway, that was the first thing I did. Exactly the first thing. I had that hanging up in the studio in Rome and the gallery owner, the famous gallery owner—he was in Rome looking at some stuff in the studio where I was, and he walked into my studio, and I was in there, and he said, "That's a serious painting. That's a serious painting." And I said, "They're all serious!" I didn't know who he was at the time, but he was very famous.

Littman: I have some questions for you, Stan: When you selected a subject, like this Kearney at San Pasqual, did you have the whole concept all thought out? Did you have in mind the particular plan, that composition?

Galli: No, I didn't have that plan, but I wanted to do lancers. As I say, I had seen this "Battle of San Romano" by Paolo Ucello, with all the lances, and I thought, "Gee, they'd look wonderful just sticking straight up, instead of straight out." I had been reading a lot of California history, and that featured very well because they ran Kearney off the field with those lances, and he had a howitzer with him, too!

Riess: Where had you seen the Ucello?

Galli: In a book.

Fran: We saw it in the Uffizi.

Galli: Not in the Uffizi. It's in Paris, isn't it Suzanne? [It is in the National Gallery, London.]

Littman: Had you already been working in the Spanish California style?

Galli: Oh, absolutely. I got immersed in that. I started—I knew the work of Joe Mora, and he saw the tail end of things, and he described a lot of things for me. I didn't use his illustrations, I would just read, I did a hell of a lot of reading. And I had a historian, a guy named Rudy Laros, who gave me a lot of information about how people lived then.

Littman: And the colors?

Galli: The colors you devise yourself, to go with what you are thinking about.

Riess: Tell me more about Rudy Laros, would you?

Galli: He had access to a lot of diaries and things like that, and he gave me an idea of how people lived at that time. He lived in the neighborhood, and I ran into him—he was teaching at the College of Marin. When we talked I found out he knew a lot of things I didn't know, so I got him working on that. When I told him I was doing this kind of stuff he said, "I'm from a Spanish family, we know all about that!" He'd go off looking for photographs for me, he'd go to libraries, he'd do research for me. I would pay him a little bit, but it wasn't very much.

Riess: Would you say your style is similar to Joe Mora's?

Galli: Well, yes, I guess there are similarities. He had all the detail that I needed. Information is what I was after, and it was all there, how they dressed and everything else. So I'd take that and transpose it and use it.

Riess: This is one of the responsibilities of the illustrator, to provide accurate information?

Galli: Absolutely, absolutely, as accurate as you know how.

Littman: But not literal.

Galli: Well, I have a tendency to be literal. I was trained that way, as an illustrator.

Littman: But when you began to paint, Stan, you were trying to communicate something more?

Galli: Yes I was. And color does that. A lot. I work out a color sketch, and I usually follow that. But then when I get to a large painting it's another dimension, it has a different effect.

Riess: You worked out the Joaquin Murieta painting in many colors, red, green, purple.

Galli: But I chose the red. It signified action. And he was much hunted. I wanted him fleeing and looking back at his pursuers.

Riess: [to Littman] How did you meet Stanley Galli?

Littman: Through a dear friend of ours, E.B. Spiller, who's now dead. We spent a lot of time over at E.B.'s playing tennis, and their children, one of whom will be here today with her husband, Susan [Acquistapace]. I met Stan thirty years ago. He was just beginning to exhibit those California paintings, and he had a big exhibit down at the Santa Barbara Museum. I think it was at the wedding of Susan, actually, that I asked Stan if he'd consider selling that painting to me, that drawing ["They Met Kearney..."], and he said he would, and I bought it. I'm sure I didn't pay nearly enough for it, but I've had it ever since and like it a lot.

There was another of his paintings that I really wanted, and I hope you can get a picture of it. It was the Spanish Steps in Rome on a rainy day. And they are slick and there is somebody walking on them. Well, E.B.'s cousin from Louisiana [Douglas Manship] was visiting, and we were looking at these at Stan's house, and I wanted very much to buy that

painting, and I was foolish enough to mention how much I liked it, and E.B.'s cousin bought it! I'm glad he has it. It's a lovely painting. You can get a picture of it, I'm sure.

Riess : [to Galli] I'd like to hear about this painting of the Spanish Steps, Stan.

Galli: I just had a fellow sitting on the Spanish Steps, you know. I was there, and it happened to strike me as something I could do. I liked all the lines of the steps. And I have that lone figure sitting on it. You know, I did a number of studies of that to get what I wanted. I probably have those studies—gee, I've got a million studies, and they all look pretty good to me, now, now that I look at them.

[responding to a question about making a living, and how the illustration business paid] You made your money off of advertising, like that Weyerhauser account. And I had to divide it up because they wanted me to do them all—you know, twelve paintings a year. I had to get Fred Ludekens to help me with that, because he was a lot more able than I was. That was \$3000 a painting from Weyerhauser.

Oh I made plenty of money, my God! And everybody would call me. I had a \$1000 minimum. And if the time wasn't right, I wouldn't do it. And Chevrolet would pay \$3500 for a Chevrolet ad.

Fran: He painted the cars.

Galli: You know, I had an experience—the first job I did for Campbell-Ewald I did a Chevrolet thing, and they [Chevrolet] called me, they said, "Did you do the cars?" You know, I did the people *and* the cars, but they had always had somebody to do the people and somebody else to do the cars.

But you know, I was making enough money that I was satisfied.

*The party moves inside for lunch.*

Galli: Jeffrey Smart was the first one there [with a house in Arezzo] and I met him on the road.

Fran: We were just down the road from our house, and going around a little bend there was a car stopped. And Jeffrey got out of the car and came to us and said he had some kind of motor trouble. Stan said, "I'll call and see that somebody gets to you." And he [Smart] said, "Come over and have a drink with us tonight." We had been there only a few days, and I thought there was somebody sitting there in the car beside him—all I could see was the curly blonde hair. Well, we went up to have a drink and it was a man! [laughter] And they'd had a fight and he'd turned his back to us and he was pouting!

Galli: Jeffrey was a very successful painter, Australian.

Littman: [The group looks at a series of paintings that Galli has brought to the lunch for discussion. Susan Acquistapace holds them up for questions and responses by Stan. First is a painting of a black cowboy. The model was another of the artists at Patterson and Hall whom Stan asked to pose. Stan calls what he was doing in the painting “symbolic.”]

Why just his head?

Galli: Because it tells everything. The color of the skin, and the hat makes it a cowboy. And so you get the symbolism. Gee, you’ve got all the symbols you can use.

[discussing a painting of a man bent over a bathtub] I saw the bathtub in a friend’s house in Kentfield. And this is a murder going on. He’s drowning somebody, a woman, his wife, and everything on the floor is in disarray. This was a true story, I mean this was for *True* magazine.

Susan: It’s dated June, 1956. “Case of the Self-made Widow.”

Galli: I wanted to bring that to show because to do that I used a friend’s bathtub, and I used a model, and he did that very well. What I did is, I found a bathtub, and I had him just bend over and do that. I took a photograph.

[looking at painting of a woman with her heel caught in a cable car track] I did covers for *San Francisco Life*. I read newspaper articles of that period; I’d go to the main library and get the old newspapers they had. And I found out that a woman got her heel caught in the slot, the cable car slot--that was the Pacific Avenue cable car that went on down to the Ferry Building.

[laughs] It was Christmastime, and I put my name on one of the packages there.

This *San Francisco Life* was an entertainment magazine and they gave it out at theaters, like a playbill. My compensation was seats for two at the theater! Doing these really helped my career; I started getting a lot of work on the basis of those. I had to do one a month. I was working at Patterson and Hall, and I did these on the side. This was in 1938.

[explaining a painting of a preacher standing behind a naked girl who he has mostly covered up with a blanket] His hand is on the Bible.

Susan: This is a story from *True* magazine, that was from the crime files, and you are characterizing it.

Galli: Yes, I am characterizing it. And I chose to do it this way. I mean, I hadn’t any idea what she really looked like, or what he looked like either. That was the main illustration that characterized the story. And *True* magazine was true, these were all things that happened, and that’s why they sold their magazine.

Littman: It was a big success in its day. It was very popular.



Galli: And this [painting] I brought because it shows “why an illustration and not a photograph.” You see, that’s the question. And how would you get a guy in a snowstorm? You’d have to be a movie director to be able to do that. Here he is, the snow is swirling around him. I picked that up to show you—I had forgotten I had it. And why not a photograph? Because you can’t duplicate that scene, you’d have to make a movie.

[in response to many questions about the story] I have no idea, I don’t remember the story. But it was a story for the *Post*, I believe.

Littman: Do you know, Suzanne, that Stan has all stories that he has illustrated? From the magazines?

Galli: Oh yes, I would tear them out and I would save them.

[looking at a painting] Now this is the story—these two gals, one of them wanted to get married. They went to the racetrack to find a husband, and Saratoga was the place they thought they should go to, and this is what I symbolized.

Susan: Did you go to New York to do that?

Galli: No, I had photographs of Saratoga, and I put the background in there, and a couple of horses to symbolize the racetrack. And that man on the side there, he’s ignoring them. But I thought that would show what you [I] think about to characterize the story.

Susan: And you had to think about the clothes. The hats and the gloves.

Galli: Oh absolutely, I had to think about all those things.

*The luncheon guests talk about Italy, and the pleasures of living there in the summers.*

Fran: [talking about the decision to sell the house in Italy and give up the summers there, and the first signs of Stan’s health problems] I was getting tired. It’s a long flight over and a long flight back. And getting out of our house in Kentfield and getting somebody in the house. Opening up the house in Italy and closing it up again. It was beginning to get to me.

Littman: But you had a good, long run.

[proposes a toast to Stan]

As time goes by, you wonder what it’s all about, you wonder what lasts. The words sort of fade on the breeze. Art lasts. I mean, look at all the things that have happened over the history of civilization, the one thing that stands out is: What are the buildings that were built? What are the paintings that were painted? What are the sculptures that were sculpted. Oh, there are some words, too, that are immortal.



You, Stan, to me, are one of those few, fortunate people who have devoted your life to art. And you've had a good time at it, you've enjoyed it, you've lived the full life. So I just want to salute you, on behalf of all of us.

To Stan!

Galli: Thank you all.



**Art Center School and Famous Artists School,  
A Conversation Held at Design Conference, Park City, Utah, Feb. 1-2, 1988.**

Interviewer: Let's say you were younger, a forty-year-old or something like that, and you were given the possibility of setting up an art school like Art Center School just for illustrators, let's say, for people who want to become artists. And what would you set up as a curriculum? What would you say would be an ideal school for artists?

Galli: Well, that's a question that needs a lot of thought. But just if I could just talk off the top of the head, you will forgive a little incoherence.

Interviewer: Yeah, because it might have to do with the schools you went to, what they lacked and what ideas you may have had that you wish you could have done.

Galli: Well, the one thing that Art Center had and I can only--I have to hark back to that a little bit because Tink Adams, the founder--that school was born out of the realities of the advertising world which needed a supply of people that could fashion the advertising visually and every other way, production-wise and every other way. So he founded a school and I can't speak for his particular premise. Only the thing that I felt that he had done which was to really bring reality to the teaching, to prepare one for the realities of the life out there. Not the--if you can inject some idealism, all well and good, but there was a reality out there. You had to perform. Somebody was going to pay you to make a tailor-made presentation that made them unique as against somebody else. This was always a very big effort on everybody's part and so I think he succeeded in doing that. He would not accept students that weren't going to make his school the fountainhead of--what would you say? A fountainhead of a supply of people that were going to service a nation. And I think he did it.

So then if you ask me what kind of art school I would do, I have to agree with starting off on the basis of bringing the realities of what you are going to do. If you want to go into this form of art, it's an art of servicing. It's performing for somebody else's needs. Now, that's tough stuff because you have your own needs. You have your own esthetic needs, but let me talk about that for just a minute. I think in some of my discussions with some of the people that you've seen, some of the older illustrators, there was always a little bit of a feeling about the esthetics, too. You wanted to increase your esthetic quotient but you were circumscribed by some of the limitations around you. You were made to perform in a form of realism that was currently acceptable. And what I mean by that is there seemed to be a language that other people understood and that was an abject (?) reality that is, you know, the way Norman Rockwell presented an emotional reality. It was very much the habit. I still

think it exists. However, there's a bigger quotient, there's a bigger audience that understands a broader imagination.

You have to put yourself back in the period. In that period where we were operating there was a volume of work, there was a volume of magazines being published. There was a lot of imagery around and most people's exposure to art, okay, now listen to this, art, was what they saw in publications. There was a very small minority that were esthetically inclined that went to museums and dwelled in the higher atmosphere. So we as illustrators always felt we had a big responsibility to upgrade the esthetics while yet satisfying the needs of these really pretty hard-boiled clients who had lots of money on the line and were expecting you to make a tailor-made suit that didn't pinch anywhere.

So when I go to think about fashioning an art school, I have to say that I would want to bring the realities but also to nurture that esthetic side and be sure that a person making a choice could either make a choice to go that route that wanted to make a career servicing an industry with high hopes of bringing to it something of themselves or to just drop it and to have a segment of the school that could nurture this other side. And I think that's what a university does. That's what you do, isn't it?

Interviewer: I hope so.

Galli: The structure, the nitty gritty of it, I'm not competent to say, but as a general premise.

I did do some teaching, of course. I was called on and I was asked to teach a course of advanced students in illustration and related things. This was at the City College of San Francisco, San Francisco City College, a two-year college. And these were advanced students. Well, I refused to do a full-time job and it was the nicest thing I could have done because the head of the department had to come down and do another fallback position which was to hire two other people and he hired two wonderful people. So the students had three professionals that were on the firing line where the bullets were whizzing that knew the realities and I think it was a great idea.

And so I taught for quite a number of years and I took that time off to go to Italy and when I came back, I had been--. Oh, well, let me say that reality was my big thing there, too, and but more so when I came back from Italy because during that period--that was 1969--we were still in the throes of all these kinds of things like the Free Speech Movement and blah, blah, and peace and love and war, mayhem and environment and all the kinds of things and I was seeing a lot of young people running around Europe with peace and love signs on, written all over them and doing outlandish, arrogant things and I was very upset about that.

So when I came back, I talked to the head of the department. I said, "Look, I'm going to teach the same course, but I'm going to call it something different. I'm going to call it the Philosophy of Effort as applied to our particular little thing." And I

started off by getting my regular student, a student coming in on their thing and I would address them and say, "Now, look, I'm outlining what I'm going to do here and you can either stay or drop out." I said that that's what this course is going to be called. "It's not on the book as that but this is what it's going to be and it's going to be your effort plus mine, too. You're going to have to be here on time, you're going to be judged on intent rather than ability." Well, the head of the department didn't like this and in talking with some of the other people in the school, they thought this would drive students away. It didn't. Nobody dropped out. As a result, we had a pretty good class.

And there again, talking about the realities, I stressed that more importantly and all the assignments I gave were along that line. I even went to the extent of having thought I invented shoe polish because in Italy, my wife wanted me to finish a piece of furniture we had and all I had around was some beeswax and some dry color and I tried to dissolve the beeswax and I found out you had to do it with turpentine and heat. And when it was done, the brew smelled exactly like shoe polish. But that's aside from the story. But when I came back, one of the first assignments was I said, "Look, we're going to form a company, make shoe polish."

I said, "Now, we've gotta go through the whole routine of it, of financing it, of deciding all about this thing. We've got the shoe polish. How are we going to market it? First of all, how are we going to finance it? How are we going to market it? What will be the market? Who will be the recipients?" All this kind of stuff. We went through the whole thing and it's amazing how these kids got involved, and I let them do it all. I wanted to acquaint them with the realities of these kinds of people they're going to work for eventually. The rigors they had to go through of financing a structure, of finding out all about competition, all these things. And that was the most magnificent experience because these kids did the darnedest things.

We took up an awful lot of time in discussion and they finally resolved--one kid was pretty brilliant: he had been seeing whiskey advertising, I remember, Dewar's or one of those was featuring highland regiments, and he'd somehow gotten the idea that British regiments were pretty spit and polish. And he discussed that with all the rest. (See, my input was very little. I just listened to all this and the kids all got in this and a lot of the kids didn't know what this was all about.) He presented to them the idea that they could ascribe this new polish to having been invented by a British sergeant in the Royal Fusiliers or something like that, and that it was a secret that other regiments would like to know about it. You couldn't say all that in a lot of advertising, but that was kind of a premise.

Well, okay, they decided that. And then where would you sell this? Well, they didn't want to go into W. L. Worth's with it. They felt that things were so competitive, couldn't they get a more unique place? Couldn't they get into fancy men's stores? Couldn't they put a higher price on it because it had this secret ingredient and all these kinds of things they were thinking about? Then they finally how to design it so that it



carried out the spit and polish and high elegance that they were talking about. And the final design came out with a can, the normal shoe polish can which everybody would recognize as shoe polish, and it had a British flag on it. You could see it from a block away. It was incredible. So that was wonderful. We went on with assignments like that, all kinds of assignments. And doing your own writing, a little journalism, laying out the page for instance.

Well, I don't want to go into this more, but there were a lot of assignments all based on complete reality, let's leave it that way. And so an art school? Well, that's the way I taught. Now, I wouldn't premise an art school on that, but I would premise it on the reality of life and that takes into consideration easel painting, too, the realities of the importance of your mind at work, not somebody else's. Your mind, out of the depths of your deepest feelings to produce something that you honestly think about. It may be a starvation route, but this is what you have to decide yourself.

Interviewer: That's important, that part, because I'd say most of the illustrators have in the back of their mind that eventually they want to paint for themselves.

Galli: I don't know, I didn't think about that. I guess you're right.

Interviewer: A lot of students think that down the line they want to put skill in illustration into gallery painting. I mean, doing their own thing eventually. We're trying to teach fundamentals so they can do that eventually. Teach a lot of painting and drawing.

Galli: Yes, and that's right. If we could go into building an art school, I would have to bring all those things in which you're doing. But I do stress the reality because that has, to me, a very fundamental factor.

[tape interruption]

Interviewer: Tell me some examples of design problems you would use to teach.

Galli: I dealt with some practical questions about a magazine cover for a women's magazine, or *Seventeen Magazine*. I gave those problems. Those challenge the mind of that young student, there's no question about that. But if I were dealing with some advanced students where I wanted them to think in advance of their intellect, I would have to think about that a little bit more and right off the top of my head, I can't think of anything. But we're talking about students that are oriented to performing their services for industry all the time. Well, then it would have to be a practical problem, you see. Because if I were proposing an esthetic problem, it would certainly be a lot different than that. And I don't know what that would be. I'm a little hard put for that.

[tape interruption]

Galli: This terrible mistress of art that I had consumed an awful lot of my time. And to keep a marriage intact I relied very heavily on the kind of constancy of my mate who is remarkable that way and understanding it all, and I tried my darnedest. I tried to soften all the, cushion all the things that come about by being wedded to a ogre. And there is ego involved, too. But that's part of our frame. I don't know what to do about that. I'm not that learned and I can't discover the fashion for that.

[second day of conference]

Galli: Thank you, John, and thank you everybody. I'm glad to be here. Well, I'm going to talk about the Famous Artists School. And I don't know how many of you know about it, but it started in the late '40s and the way it started is, as I remember it, I wasn't there at the time, but shortly after I was. Al [Dorne] and Fred [Ludekens] and Ed and one other were sitting in the Waldorf Men's Bar--when I was in New York, we'd go to the Waldorf Men's Bar for lunch, and that was a great place because they would have a table set for a whole bunch of guys and there'd be bottles of whiskey on the table and you drank all you want. I'm not a drinker, but I appreciate that freedom, and they'd sit there and chatter about all kinds of things and it was really quite wonderful for the then novice that I was.

And the reason this thing came up is Al started talking about the fact that he got so many letters from young people that wanted to study with him. Well, he never had the time and he'd have to write regretful letters about all of these things and every other artist had the same problem. And when I started illustrating, I began to get letters, too, from people because you appeared in the magazines and so you were pretty highly visible. So he talked about this with the rest of the fellows about why not start some kind of school? And that's where the idea was born. I don't know what the final discussions were, but it formulated then amongst those four people.

I guess the next step was to analyze the whole situation and recruit people that were in the area, mainly. That seemed to be the thing because Al lived in New York City, but some of the others lived in Westport, Connecticut and so it was decided that the current people that lived in Westport and in New York City would be the logical people because all the good illustrators are there. The West Coast is not very much of a place for illustration. All the publishing houses are in New York City and those of us that lived on the West Coast had our eyes set on Mecca, which was in the East. So it started that way and they selected people that were very current and very visible which was a great idea because when they did any kind of marketing or advertising, these people were visible if you cared to look for them. The only thing about that was that the only person really that people knew was Norman Rockwell, really. The rest of the illustrators really nobody knew anything about and unless they looked, they wouldn't know who they were. So that was pretty interesting. These things came up in all the discussions that I was at about the marketing, this part of it.

Now it sounds like a cold, calculated business but it really wasn't. The charm of this whole correspondence really was the fact that all of these artists were very sincere guys. They'd all come up the hard way, they had a great grasp of the realities of life, and they weren't about to write a course that was in any way phony. They really bared their heart in these things and completely honest. No secrets were held back and I think it was really pretty magnificent. Now, the thing about the correspondence school, I guess, if you've ever thought about it, is that--. Incidentally, can you all hear me? Not that it's worth hearing, but I want to reach the back, too.

A home study course is very difficult to begin with. I had many people ask me about the Famous Artists School. They knew I was connected with it and I'd say--. People that asked me in San Francisco or near any city, I'd say, "Look, go to an art school, because there you're in company with other people who are striving, you have a chance to see other kinds of thinking, and do that." Home study is very difficult, but I'm telling you, the material that was supplied was absolutely superb. It was all there, but difficult to grasp, I think, when you're very much alone. They had a system of correcting lessons and things of that kind. They tried to make it as personal as possible. The WATS line system hadn't been installed yet, but later on when the Famous Artists School began to develop an educational course, they had worked out a system where the student could call his professor which made it a lot more personal. But still this was great for people in rural areas where they didn't have a chance to go to schools so we could see that.

In talking about a correspondence school and talking about marketing, it sounded like it was just a money game. Well, it really wasn't. These guys were really pretty sincere. I knew very intimately. I met all of them, of course, but there were a few that I knew quite well. The Famous Artists School went along very, very nicely. It was very successful until Albert died. Albert became very ill and died and the big problem there was that he had not trained anybody to take his place. And the next person in line there was a fellow named Gil who was really accounting oriented, and as far as I was concerned didn't really know very much about an art school. And he took over the thing and there was a lot of money involved and he started buying companies, like he bought an accounting school which was okay because it was doing well.

But I got upset when he bought a thing called Welcome Wagon! Does anybody know what Welcome Wagon is? Well, it's sort of a service thing as far as I can make out where it was run by a group of older women, and they had a wonderful business, and this guy paid 8 million bucks cash for it. Other things he bought like the accounting school he used Famous Artists School stock as part payment. But 8 million bucks cash was kind of difficult.

I saw Gil and I said, "Why are you buying things like this? Next you'll be buying hot dog stands." Boy, he got real mad at me. He said, "Look, kid, you don't know anything about equity." Yeah, I guess I didn't and I went away with my face flushed



and that's it. But what happened was they got into a little bit of a bind, there was a recession on and cash flow started slipping a little bit. Other factors, Jessica Mitford-- she had just finished this book about burial down at Forest Lawn, the funeral business, and if you know about her, she's a writer that takes issues like this. She took hold of the Famous Artists School and found somebody that was unhappy, made a big thing of that. It was a little old lady that had made a down payment for this thing and I don't really know all the things that happened. But she wrote about this.

As a result of that it attracted a lot of attention and a lot of city attorneys and state attorneys began to develop some rule where people could pay a down payment to take the course and if they didn't like it, not pay for it all. Well, that created a big problem. So with one thing and another--. I was living in Rome at the time and so I didn't know really what was going on except that I began to hear some news that they were faltering, and by gosh, without any notice at all, it went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. That was the end of that. And I lost quite a lot of money there which is okay, too. The sun still came up, but that's one thing I do remember.

[narrates a slide show]

Well, there they all are. Jon Whitcomb over on this side, Norman Rockwell with his hand up to his mouth, Bob Schmidt is down below him, Don Kidman who's still around, still has black hair and Steve says he still has a flashing smile. My very close friend Fred Ludekens standing right in the middle of that picture. I don't know who that man is. Oh yes, that is Ed, right below. Al Parker, and that's Peter [Helck], and Ben Stahl, Robert Fawcett and Al up there and Mr. [?] who is a financial sort of fellow. There's the whole gang and really they look pretty good. We really didn't dress like that every minute.

The only one missing here is Fred. The one that you didn't see in the first picture who came into the picture later was this man with a more Egyptian type of thing, John Atherton. He was a San Francisco man and very, very successful and a lovely artist. I met him only a couple of times. I didn't get to know him a great deal. He did very well. But these fellows all made a painting of Samson and Delilah and this is each of their interpretations, and so a quick glance at those will give you an idea of how they interpreted this thing in their various styles. Okay?

Fred here had a very analytical mind and really he was responsible for really putting together the basic course of which I sat in on a lot. He had moved out to Belvedere, California and I had known him for some years before and we became very close friends and I worked very closely with him. When Al died, Fred became Chairman of the Board. The Chairman of the Board living in Belvedere and Gil was operating President, going around buying all these hot dog stands. So problems.

Al, he's a wonderful guy. I knew him for many years. When I first went to New York ringing doorbells, Al said to me, he said, "Look, kid." He said, "You're not

going to go back to California, are you?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "Listen, you can't do that, that won't work." I said, "Well, we've got aeroplanes, why not, and telephones." And it did work. It worked like crazy. Al, look at his bushy brows, and Al had eyelashes both topside and bottom side so he looked the same upside down as he does here. Really, I'm not kidding. Yeah. This is Al Parker looking at a pile. I don't know what he's looking for, but he's got a lot of piles there. Oh, here's Al again. I think that was here, wasn't that, John? He's a lovely guy and what an artist. My God, he was an inspiration to all of us. We all waited to see what was appearing next. Here's some of his work, great stuff. He got right to the root of the story, I'd say. Now this, I hadn't seen. This is from *Boys' Life*. When he came out West to Carmel Valley, he started doing a lot of work for *Boys' Life* Magazine, all of which I've never seen. Lovely. He's just a great designer.

Interviewer: He [John] was a musician on a riverboat on the Mississippi when he was young.

Galli: Oh, yes, he was a musician on a riverboat. He was a great guy on the drums as I remember. I went to a party one time when he banged around on the drums. Isn't that lovely? Oh, boy. He was an inspiration to all of us.

There are some wonderful photos that John took of Norman Rockwell's paintings. This was at that show in San Francisco? Well, I was there and Norman had just remarried and he married a schoolteacher, a lovely woman, and he was wonderful to have around. That was Gary Cooper, as a matter of fact, he said he was making up. Great stuff. I remember Norman said something one time about how to go onto the *Post* for the first time. He was scared to death. He went up to Philadelphia into this wonderful, big old place [Curtis Publishing] and he carried a big box, a big black box, he told me and he had all his paintings in it that he brought to the art director and the art director took this stuff out and disappeared and Norman was sitting in his office--.

[end of tape]



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### **Suzanne Bassett Riess**

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